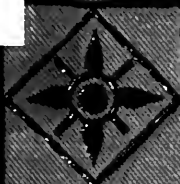
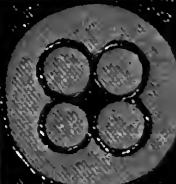
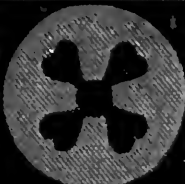
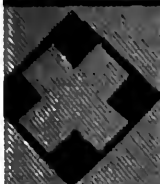
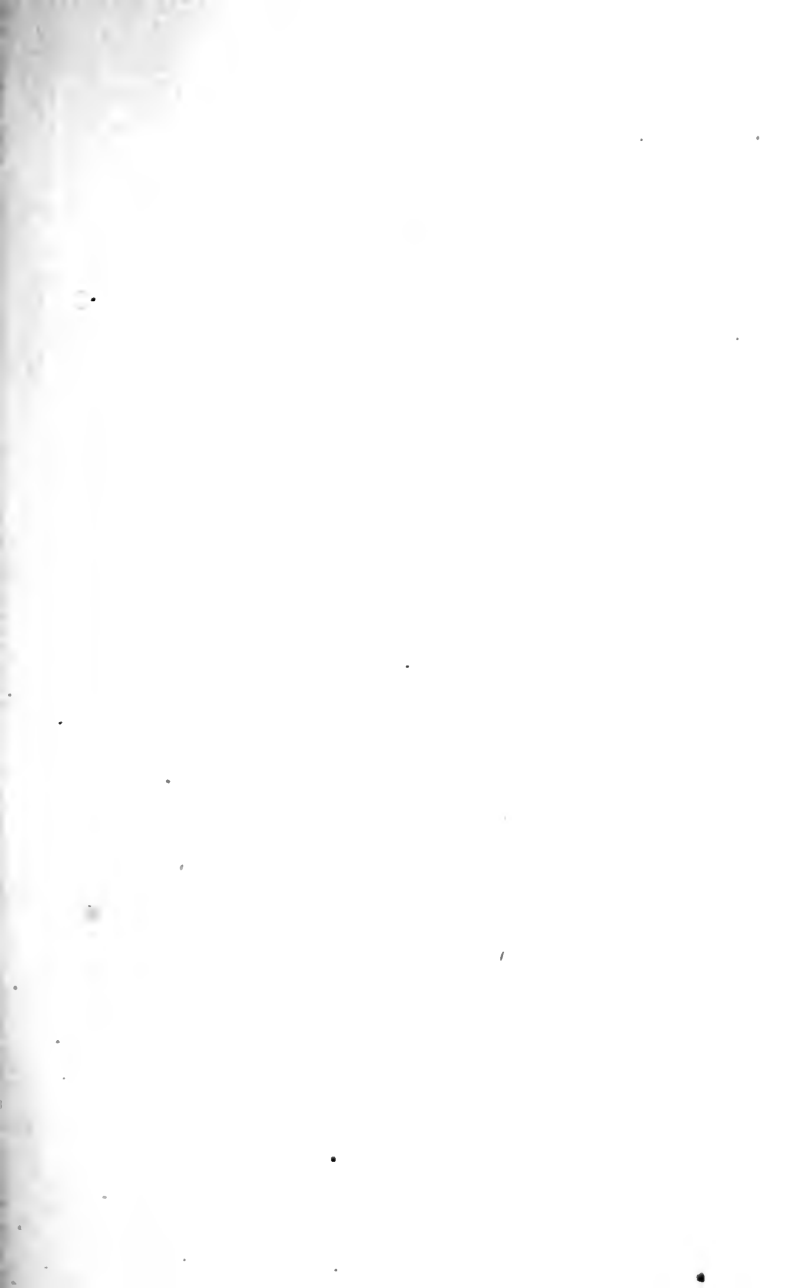




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CHRIST

ALL IN ALL TO BELIEVERS;

OR

WHAT CHRIST IS MADE TO BELIEVERS,

IN

FORTY REAL BENEFITS.

BY THE REV. PHILIP HENRY.

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WHAT CHRIST IS TO BELIEVERS.



CHAPTER I.

CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION AND BELIEVERS
ARE THE BUILDING.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

It is not here alone, but in many other scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, that our Lord Jesus Christ is held forth unto us under the notion of a *foundation*; and believers, the church of the first-born, under the notion of a great *building*, reared upon that foundation. The explaining and applying of this will be our present work.

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation, and believers are the building reared upon that foundation.

There is a like union and relation between him and them, as there is between a foundation and a building.

Now that relation and union is

Very near and close. The closer the better. Such is that between Christ and his church. They that are joined to the Lord are one with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "For both he that sanctifies and they

who are sanctified are all of one," *of one piece*. Heb. ii. 11.

It is also *very necessary and useful*. The building cannot stand without it. A foundation may stand long enough without a building upon it, but no building can stand without a foundation under it: and they must be joined—united. So Christ might have been without us, but we cannot be without him.

But are not the apostles and prophets the foundation? Eph. ii. 20. compare Matt. xvi. 18.

I answer; it is not said, the foundation, the apostles, but the foundation *of* the apostles; that is, the foundation which they themselves rested on. Had the apostles and prophets been asked, one by one, Who is your foundation? on whom do you build for life and happiness? they would have said, Jesus Christ. He was their all in all; and, therefore, should be ours.

Christ was the foundation which they reported, and preached of to others. Paul says here, *v. 10. I laid the foundation*. Whom? Himself? No, *v. 11.* no foundation but Christ. The prophets prophesied of him as to come; the apostles pointed at him as already come. "Behold the Lamb of God," said John the Baptist.

As for that place in Matthew, by *this rock*, is not meant the person of Peter. A poor rock for the church to be built on. A rock shaking immediately, *v. 22.* and worse afterward, Matt. xxvi. But it is the *confession* of Peter that is intended, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," *v. 16.* "Upon *this rock* I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

But is it not said that Jesus Christ is the corner stone? The corner stone is not the foundation!

I answer; his being the corner stone doth not hinder his being the foundation also. He is both in different respects; “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste,” Isa. xxviii. 16. The use of a corner stone is to unite the sides of the building, yea, and of the foundation too. That Christ doth by making Jew and Gentile one. “But now, in Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us,” Eph. ii. 13, 14. He that could join those two distant sides, and make them one, can certainly (and we hope will in his own due time) reconcile lesser differences. The corner post is reckoned very material in a timber fabric, and so the corner stone. “The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner,” Ps. cxviii. 22.

I. Show the properties of Christ as a foundation, what kind of foundation he is.

1. A laid foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. *I lay*; that is, God the Father, one that knew well enough how to do it, a God of infinite wisdom, and power. The Lord Jesus did not take to himself this honour of being a Mediator; he was called to it, appointed of God for such a purpose. And this is our comfort and joy; he that could best tell what would best serve to satisfy his offended justice, here fixed upon his Son for that purpose: “Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom,” Job xxxiii. 24. “I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people,” Ps. lxxxix. 19.

2. A low foundation. Foundations are wont to be laid low ; the lower the surer. So here, the Lord Jesus Christ was laid very low, that he might be a meet foundation for us ; Phil. ii. 8. he *humbled* himself.

There were several steps of his humiliation :

Into the human nature ; to be made a man. That was a long step downward. That the word should become flesh was more than if a star should turn into a clod.

Into subjection under the law. " When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. The moral law ; nay, the ceremonial law—to be circumcised—presented in the temple—redeemed and ransomed with two turtles—bound to go up to all the feasts.

Into poverty and persecution, contempt and contradiction ; to be spurned and trampled on.

To death itself, even the death of the cross , painful, shameful : it is called lifting up, but it was humiliation.

To the grave. When he was buried, he was, as other foundations, laid under the ground.

And there was a necessity for all this : without it, no atonement, no reconciliation.

3. A foundation of stone, Isa. xxviii. 16. A stone is the fittest of all other things to make foundations of, because hard and firm, and yet easily hewn. Now Jesus Christ is a stone foundation, a rock. The Israelites " did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them ; and that Rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4.

4. A foundation out of sight. All foundations are so ; we see the building, but we do not see the

foundation. Now such a foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ ; he is out of sight. Not below us, as he once was, under the earth, but above in glory.

His person is out of sight. Yet we *love* him, 1 Pet. i. 8.

His presence is invisible. He is with us every where, especially in his ordinances ; but it is in an invisible way. We feel it ; we do not see it. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20.

His proceedings are invisible ; the proceedings of his grace within, the proceedings of his providence without. "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron," Ps. lxxvii. 20.

5. A precious foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. Though all stones in their places are useful, yet they are not all precious stones. Few buildings are built upon precious stones, but the church is. Christ is precious in himself, he is of great worth, the fairest of ten thousands. He is precious in their account and esteem, 1 Pet. ii. 7. To others he is a stone of stumbling, but to them that believe he is precious.

6. A permanent foundation ; Isa. xxvi. 4. the *rock of ages*, from everlasting to everlasting. The saints have been building on him from the beginning, and will be to the end of time. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. His righteousness is everlasting righteousness ; his promises unchangeable promises.

7. An elect, chosen foundation ; Isa. xxviii. 16. *chosen* of God, and precious.

8. An experienced, tried foundation. He was tried by God, who laid a load upon him ; by men and devils, who did their best against him, yet all to no purpose ; by the saints, who have had occasion to make use of him, and he never failed them

II. Show what is our duty in reference to this foundation.

1. To believe all this concerning him—that God hath laid him purposely for a foundation—anoointed, and appointed him to be a Prince, and Saviour—given him to the world, that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

2. To behold and see our need of him. There is no rearing a building without a foundation. We have each of us a building to rear ; and what foundation have we ? None in ourselves ; no righteousness of our own to commend us to God ; no strength, or ability to any thing that is good.

3. To renounce all other foundations. They are all but sand. He that builds upon the sand, his building will fall. “ Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house : and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock. Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it,” Matt. vii. 24, &c.

4. To repair to him in the way of faithful and fervent prayer. Tell him thou art sensible of thy need of him, thou art undone without him.

5. To build upon him. In the great business of justification, to roll and rest thy soul by faith upon his meritorious righteousness—None but Christ, none but Christ.

In all our perils and dangers, personal or public, to fly to him, to trust in him, to rely upon him: faithful is he that hath promised. Ps. lxii. 1, 2; xli. 1. “Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence: I shall not be greatly moved,” Ps. lxii. 1, 2. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” Ps. xli. 1.

6. To beware what we build upon this foundation, in opinion, in practice. “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward,” 1 Cor. iii. 12—14. If you build loose, vain, careless walking, your hopes built will be accordingly wood, hay, stubble.

OF THE CHURCH THE BUILDING. “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit,” Eph.

ii. 20—22. *Ye are built*, saith the apostle,—ye believing Ephesians, Christians, saints.

Show, I. What kind of building the church is ; what are the properties of it.

There is a great deal of difference in buildings. The church is a none-such building.

1. It is a spiritual building. Other buildings are made of wood and stone, and such like materials. But this building is made of men and women : “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. ii. 5. What our Lord Jesus says of his kingdom, is true of his building, that it is not of this world—in it, but not of it, John xv. 19. It is a building of souls. Souls, united to him by faith, are those that make up this building.

2. It is a spacious building ; a building of large and vast extent ; a great house, nay a great city, nay a great kingdom, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same—east, west, north, and south, Matt. viii. 11. It is true, in comparison with the devil’s building, it is but small, a remnant, a little, little flock ; but in itself considered, it is exceedingly wide and comprehensive. “I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,” Rev. vii. 9.

3. It is a high building. Though part of it be here below, yet the top of it is as high as heaven. There it is that the glorious angels are, and the spirits of just men made perfect ; all of this building.

And then for those that belong to it that are

below their aims and desires are high, their hopes and expectations are high, their affections and conversations are above: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," Phil. iii. 20. They trample upon the great things of the world as dirt, as Moses did: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," Heb. xi. 24.

4. It is a holy building, Eph. ii. 21. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. Every building is not a temple. The church is God's temple. The temple was a place set apart for God—from all other uses for holy uses; so "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." And it is our duty to set ourselves apart to be for him—wholly—solely. This temple is called a house of prayer, Isa. lvi. 7. Holiness to the Lord is written upon the front of this building. It is the house that he dwells in. "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it," Ps. lxxxvii. 1. 2; cxxxii. 13, 14.

5. It is a living building. No other is so. The same who are quickened, are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," Eph. ii. 1, 20. The foundation is a living foundation, and the superstructure is a living superstructure, 1 Pet. ii. 4. 5. All the materials in this building are men and women made spiritually alive—quickened with divine quickenings. Such as once were

dead in trespasses and sins, but are now otherwise—alive to God. O make this sure to yourselves.

6. It is a light building. This is one thing that makes a building pleasant, and comfortable—many and large windows. All the world besides is in darkness; it is the church only that hath the true light. As Egypt and Goshen. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light.”

There are many things about which men are in the dark till they are in this building. As, about God; his glorious excellences, and perfections. About the Lord Jesus; who he is, and what he is, in himself, and to us. About the corruption of nature. About the evil of sin—the vanity of the creature. And the reality of invisible things—heaven—hell.

In all these grace enlightens. The devil’s building is a dark building—called the kingdom of darkness, Col. i. 13.

7. It is a secure, a safe building. Other buildings are exposed to wind, and weather, and water—to fire—to assaults, and batteries; but this is safe from all peril and danger, Matt. xvi. 18. Men in all ages and generations have been heaving at the church of God, and seeking to overthrow it, but it hath hitherto been in vain, and to no purpose; and will be so still, Ps. ii. The church of God is such a building as the ark was, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

8. It is a spreading, growing building. “All the building fitly framed together, *groweth* unto a holy temple in the Lord.” It grows larger—by the addition of those to it who shall be saved. It grows better—as to light and knowledge—as to gifts and graces. Amen! The Lord increase it more and more. It increases slowly—church-

work is slow work—but sure; though amidst much opposition, as in Ezra's time.

In some places, where a while ago there were but two or three houses, there is now a great town. And is it not so, (and would to the Lord it were so more and more!) as to the growth and progress of religion? In many towns and families whose ignorance and profaneness ruled a few years since, now God is worshipped, and Christ; and his truths and ways are owned, and professed.

Show, II. What is our duty in reference to this building.

1. To see that we have a secure place, and standing in it. As it is a great privilege to be of that body and tree whereof Christ is the head and root, so it is a great privilege to be of that building whereof Christ is the foundation.

It is certain all that adhere to it in an outward, visible profession are not of it. The moss and the ivy cleave close to the walls of a house, but they are not on the foundation: so the hypocrite. There is a great deal of difference between such a one and the true stones, 1 John ii. 19.

All the true stones in this building, are living stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. What life hast thou? They are a habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. Art thou so? Rather, doth not the unclean spirit dwell in thee, and rule in thee? Luke ii. 21—26.

But, how may it be done?

I answer; we must be sure we are fetched out of the quarry of a natural condition, by regenerating grace. There is much to do in this work—the dust flies in the face of him that hews; but it must be done—there is no other way.

We must by faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord;

make him our foundation ; rest and rely upon him for righteousness, acceptance, and salvation ; cleaving to him with full purpose of heart.

Having done so, we must build up ourselves in our most holy faith ; *growing* in grace ; *adding* to faith, virtue. If we grow *into Christ* more and more, we are certainly in him, Jude 20, 21.

2. To seek as much as in us lies the good of the building. If we can do nothing else we can pray for it, Ps. cxxii. 3, 6, “ for the *peace* of Jerusalem.” Peace within itself ; that differences may be healed : the cement, or mortar, is love. It is said, that all the stones in Solomon’s temple were so ordered that they looked like one stone. Peace from enemies ; open, secret, covered, uncovered.

Our prayers must be seconded with our endeavours. Can we do nothing towards its enlargement, its establishment, its repair ?



CHAPTER II.

CHRIST IS OUR FOOD, AND ALL TRUE BELIEVERS
FEED UPON HIM, AND ARE FED WITH HIM.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. John vi. 51.

THERE are several things to be learned out of these words.

I. That Jesus Christ is bread.

II. That this bread hath sundry special properties which belong to it, and to no other.

III. That it is our duty to eat of this bread.

IV. That they that truly eat of this bread shall live for ever.

I: Jesus Christ is bread. There are several things by which he is set forth in the Scriptures, and among the rest, bread. Those who heard him say that he was bread, and that they must eat him, were offended ; it was a hard saying, and they could not hear it, *v.* 60. The reason was, they understood it carnally, and they should have understood it spiritually ; just as the papists do by another of his sayings, *This is my body*. He says also, I am the vine ; I am the door : and must these be understood literally ? It cannot be. He is the head of a great body, and the foundation of a great house. Literally ? no, spiritually. So he is bread ; he himself says so.

You know bread is some kind of corn, rye, or wheat, or barley, or the like, thrashed and ground, kneaded and baked, and then it is food for us. We eat it, and are nourished by it. So Christ : he is spiritual bread.

He was thrashed and ground in his suffering and dying, and that was necessary in order to his being made bread for us : I give my flesh. Luke xxiv. 46. “ *It behoved Christ to suffer.*” It was necessary it should be so, in order to the satisfying of God’s justice, without which we could have no nourishment, no comfort to our souls. Without blood no remission. There was death in the threatening, and therefore his heel must be bruised, or the serpent’s head would not have been broken. Therefore it concerns us all to be acquainted with

Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. This was Paul's chief study, and it should be ours.

The sufferings and death of Christ are the food of our souls. Every thing that hath life must have food to support that life ; it cannot live without food. So it is with our souls ; they can no more live without food than our bodies can. Take the food away, and you take the life away. Adam in innocency had all the trees in the garden given him, save one, that the fruit thereof might be food to him ; that is, to his body ; and as for his soul, God himself immediately was the life and strength, and maintenance of it. But when we find he fell from God, all supplies of that kind were for ever cut off, and he must have perished everlastingly, if some new nourishment had not been provided for him. Now that new nourishment was the seed of the woman bruised ; and therefore God revealed it to him immediately, even before he pronounced sentence, Gen. iii.

II. Notice the properties of this bread.

1. It is the bread of God. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," *v.* 33. Not the bread which God feeds upon himself ; and yet in a sense he is so, Matt. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5. He is satisfied in him and with him. But he is the bread which he hath provided for *us* to feed upon, as the Lamb of God, John i. 29. He knew we could never have thought of such a way of nourishment for ourselves. No, not if we had all the angels in heaven to help us, and therefore he did it, Job xxxiii. 24. Ps. lxxxix. 19. Gen. xxii. 13, 14. As he is a foundation of God's laying, so he is bread of God's providing.

Was the bread made of corn for our bodies our

own contrivance? No: who could have devised such a thing? It is the appointment of our heavenly Father, and a wise and gracious appointment it is, Gen. i. 29. So Christ, the bread of life, is of God's providing.

2. It is given bread. Given by God the Father; "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," v. 32. The same that contrived gave, freely and of his own accord, without our asking or seeking. It was a choice gift, John iii. 16. It was the unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. O be sensible of this love, and give thanks; forget not this above all his benefits! "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

This bread is given by the Son himself. It was his own act and deed, to give himself to be bread for us: "My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." It was a wonder he should ever yield to such a motion when it was made to him; but he did it readily, at the first word; "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Such love he had for us, and for our redemption and salvation, Eph. v. 2. And should not we then readily and cheerfully give ourselves to him; all we are, have, or can do? Can we bestow ourselves better?

3. It is living bread. "I am the *living* bread that came down from heaven." All other bread is a dead thing, but this bread lives. It was dead, but it is alive, and lives for evermore, Rev. i. 18. And it is well for us that it is so, for he ever lives to make *intercession* for us. That is the work and business of his life, Heb. vii. 25.

4. It is the bread of life, v. 48. Not only living

itself, but giving life to us ; no other bread doth so. Other bread maintains life, but where is the bread that gives life ? This bread gives life ; it makes those to live that were dead. It is no sooner received by a hand of faith but the man is alive ; alive to God, which is the best life we can live in this world.

5. It is manna. Manna was the bread which God gave the Israelites from heaven, fresh every morning ; and dainty bread it was. It came down in a dew ; it was small, round, and white, and the time of gathering it was the morning.

This manna was a type of Christ, the true manna. As that came down from heaven, so did he ; that in a dew, he in the dew of the gospel. As that was little, round, and white, so is he ; *little*, in his humiliation ; *round*, in his eternity, without beginning of days or end of life ; *white*, in his spotless innocence. As the time for gathering that was in the morning, so of this : "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." As that fed the Israelites while in the wilderness, so this feeds our souls while we are in the wilderness of this world. It ceases in Canaan.

6. It is meat indeed, *v.* 55. It is *solid* and *substantial* meat. Not the shadow of meat, but *true bread*, *v.* 32. All the things in this world are, to a soul, like the picture of the world with which the devil tempted our Lord Jesus, delusive, and unsatisfactory. "Wherefore," then, "do ye spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

Mix faith with this, and labour accordingly, John vi. 27.

It is *suitable* meat. It is no meat if it be not suitable. Every creature is maintained with food suited to it, Gen. iii. 14. Now nothing is suitable food to our souls but Jesus Christ ; nothing else is suitable to their *nature*. Spiritual beings must have spiritual food. All things under the sun are carnal. He was a *fool* that bid his soul feast upon what was in his barn, Luke xii. 16. Nor is any thing else suited to the *necessities* of our souls. Two things our souls have need of—righteousness, and strength ; and where are these to be had, but with him ? Isa. xlv. 24. We have need of food that will be physic too : and such food is Christ, Ezek. xlvii. 12. *Sweet* meat, Cant. ii. 3. the *fruit* of his death, resurrection, ascension, 1 Pet. ii. 3. gracious, or sweet. Every thing in Christ is sweet to a believing soul : his promises, pardons, offices, ordinances, comforts, communion. His word is sweeter than honey, Ps. cxix. 103. His love is sweeter than wine, Cant. i. 2. His presence is sweeter than marrow, Ps. lxiii. 5. In a word, his mouth is sweetness, and all he is delights, Cant. v. 16.

Satisfying meat. A man may surfeit with the world, but he can never be satisfied with the world. A man may be satisfied with Christ, but he can never be surfeited with Christ. Compare Isa. lv. 2. with Ps. xxxvi. 8.—abundantly satisfied, satisfied and over-satisfied, satisfied and satisfied again. This is the excellency of spiritual dainties, that the more a man feeds on them, the more he would have, and yet he hath a kind of satisfaction in what he hath ; such as causes him to say, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul*, Ps. cxvi. 7. He

hath union with Christ, yet he would have more and nearer union; he longs to be with him.

Now all this is said to draw out your desires, and to provoke your appetite to this meat. And doth it not prevail? Do ye not feel your need of Christ? Are ye not hungering and thirsting after righteousness? If you are, blessed are ye, for ye shall be filled; if not, you will be sent away empty, Matt. v. 6. Luke i. 53.

III. It is our duty to eat of this rare bread.

If any man eat; implying, if we do not eat of it we are like to be never the better for it. It will do us no good to hear of it only. We have heard a great deal of Christ; but what will that avail us, except we believe what we hear? It will do us no good to look upon it only. Will looking upon meat nourish us? No; we must eat if we will be nourished. Will looking upon Christ, and seeing others feed upon him, feed and nourish thee? No, though it is the best fare in the world.

What is meant by eating? I answer, believing, v. 35. Of all the comparisons by which believing is set forth in Scripture, none is like this of eating Christ, and feeding upon Christ.

Before we eat we feel a need of meat, and have a desire toward it, an earnest desire, we *must* have it. Give a man what else you will; No, says he, I must have meat. As the Egyptians parted with all for bread, so it is with the soul. It sees its lost and undone condition in itself by reason of guilt, and not sees it only, but feels it, and thereupon must have Christ; as the prodigal, Luke xv.

As in eating there is the taking of the meat, putting it into the mouth, and chewing and digesting it, whereby it is made my own, and turned

into blood and spirits in my body ; so in believing there is a particular application made of Christ, and his merit and righteousness, Gal. ii. 21. We may see, and hear, and smell at a distance, but that that we eat must be near us ; that that nourishes must be made one with us. "That Christ may dwell *in* your hearts," Eph. iii. 17.

As after eating there is strength and vigour, (Ps. civ. 15. *the staff of life*,) the desire satisfied, the body recruited, made able for work and burthen ; so upon believing there follows spiritual strength, peace, comfort, joy, ability for duty, walking with God, working for God, which they that do not believe have not.

How is it proved to be the duty thus to do ?

I answer ; 1. From the many calls and invitations to it both in the Old Testament, and in the New, Isa. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37. If his mind were not we should come and eat, he would not in this manner invite and call. See Mark x. 49. He calls ; therefore we may come.

2. From the many commands and injunctions to it, absolutely requiring it of us. He commands, therefore we must come. We are under guilt, the greatest guilt of all other, if we do not, 1 John iii. 23. O bethink thyself, and do as he commands. Thou hast broken other commands ; in this be obedient. It is to eat of the best meat that ever was prepared. When the serpent (namely, the devil) assailed Eve, that which gave him advantage was, that the thing he moved her to was only to eat, and the fruit was such as was pleasant. Yet all the persuasions of heaven and earth will not prevail with some people to eat of this fruit ; not forbidden, but *commanded*, fruit ; not meat that will poison, but meat that will *save* them.

O then take and eat; receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and believe in him: think thou hearest him saying to thee, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1. Shall I inquire what bread do ye live upon? Bread of idleness, deceit, violence, carnal pleasure, your own duties and performances! It will be gravel, Prov xx. 17.

IV. They that truly eat of this bread shall live for ever.

What more likely motive could possibly be used to prevail with us: Eat, and live; eat, and live for ever! Everlasting life will certainly be the portion of all those, that by a true and a lively faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, who eat his flesh and drink his blood, feed upon him. But who says so? He that will certainly make it good; the Amen, the faithful and true witness. It is repeated often, v. 35, 48. and v. 47. with a solemn asseveration:—he *hath* it; it is as surely his as if now in glory. Now, do you know what this living for ever is, what it means? It is to be saved; delivered from the second death in hell, and made eternally happy in heaven. And shall not this allure us? God said to Adam, In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die the death, surely die. Christ says to us, In the day thou eatest, living thou shalt live, thou shalt surely live. Eating ruined us, eating saves us.

Inference,

1. Then the bread spoken of in this chapter is not sacramental bread; nor the eating here spoken of sacramental eating, as the papists would have it, to prove transubstantiation.

For, the sacrament of the Lord's supper was not yet instituted, when Christ spake this: and, there-

fore, it had been impossible for his hearers to understand what he meant.

Many do eat the sacramental bread that do not live for ever, as 1 Cor. x. 4.

Many do live for ever, that never eat sacramental bread, as, besides all elect infants dying in infancy or childhood, the converted thief upon the cross, and many an other. Yet to eat the sacramental bread is certainly duty—*Do this*; and for any that are adult to live in the neglect of it when they have a call to it, and opportunity for it, is a great sin, and must be reckoned for. Nay, it is comfortable, sweet, profitable, gainful duty; it is a feast, and that is the reason our Lord Jesus hath appointed the outward elements to be bread and wine, that by eating and drinking them by faith, might be sealed to us pardon of sin, peace with God, right and title to heaven.

2. Then see the reason why multitudes perish eternally. They will not eat of this bread, their mouths are out of taste to it, they are filled with worldly trash; if he that eats lives eternally, he that doth not eat dies eternally. This is gospel, Mark xvi. 16.

3. Then you that have eaten, in God's name, take the comfort of it; I mean, that are true believers. Eternal life is yours.

4. Then be exhorted all of you to eat of this bread; we must eat often, daily.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST IS THE ROOT AND BELIEVERS ARE THE
BRANCHES.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. John xv. 5.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus, which he spake to his disciples ; wherein he says, concerning himself, I am the vine, and concerning them, Ye are the branches. I am the vine, namely, the root of the vine. Christ and true believers are a great tree ; and, amongst all other trees, he hath pitched upon two to set forth himself and them ; a vine here, and an olive-tree in Rom. xi. Both of them are choice trees, and of great use, bearing excellent fruit. Now, the root is Christ, and believers are the branches of that tree. These two, the root and the branches, make the tree, as the head and members do the body. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 12.

Doct. Jesus Christ and true believers make one great tree, whereof he is the root and they are the branches.

I wave at present that it is a vine ; having had occasion lately to speak of the church under that notion from Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. and therefore I only say, it is a tree, a great tree, whereof he is the root, believers are the branches.

Show, I. They that are in this relation are true believers.

Are not hypocrites branches ? Doth not baptism ingraft all that come under that ordinance into Christ ? In a sense it doth, into his visible

body ; many grafts are grafted that come to nothing, never knit, never fasten, and so wither and die : yet the stock remains alive and good, and breaks forth again. So it is here : only true believers, such as are called, and chosen, and faithful, are the true branches.

1. They, and none but they, have communion with Christ. Elect persons not yet called may be said to have a remote potential union, being in the decree. External visible professors have a kind of seeming union, such as a sprig or branch which is tied to a tree with a string or withe only, may be said to have ; which is another sort of union than that of the true branches. The true branches are so in it as to be of it, but so is not such a branch, 1 John ii. 19. Judas was constantly with Christ as the rest of the apostles were, tied both to him and them by an external tie, yet all the while he was a limb of the devil, a branch of the cursed root ; not of Christ the true root.

O then see to this, that besides the outward, there be an inward, ingrafting by a true act of faith.

2. They, and none but they, have spiritual life in them. We are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins, dead in law, dead in state ; there is no spiritual life in us, none of the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. we are alienated from it. We have natural life, and live as men, but not otherwise. Just as in a tree ; you may see it plainly in yonder great oak ;* how many dead branches are there : *branches*, but dead. Such are all hypocrites in the tree Christ ; they have none of Christ's

* Mr. Henry's residence was called Broad Oak, there being a large tree of that description very near the house. It was cut down in May, 1711. Matt. Henry's Diary, MS.

Spirit dwelling in them, and therefore they have no life. It is the Spirit that quickens, 1 Cor. xv. 45. They have not the Son, therefore no life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John v. 12.

It concerns us all to inquire, What life have I? Am I alive to God? The prodigal son was alive, during his ramble, but not to his father, he was dead to him. Inquire what signs of life you have. Do you possess sense, motion, appetite?

3. They, and none but they, do bring forth fruit in him, see v. 2.—"every branch *in me* that brings not forth fruit." To bring forth fruit is to do that which is for the matter of it good; either towards men, in works of justice, mercy, charity; or towards God, in praying, hearing, sanctifying the sabbath. Now all this an hypocrite may do; nay, he may do more than many a true Christian; but nothing of it *in Christ*. Here they part. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the *name* of the Lord Jesus," Col. iii. 17. They do it by virtue of strength received from him, John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

They bring forth fruit, aiming with a single eye at pleasing him, to show forth his virtues and praises, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And also, it is done trusting to his merit and mediation alone for acceptance, Phil. iii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Now doth any hypocrite do this? Can he say, as Paul, Phil. i. 21. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

4. They, and none but they, have heartily and unfeignedly consented to him. This is it that makes Christ ours, and us his; when we receive him to ourselves, John i. 12. and give ourselves to him, 2 Cor. viii. 5. upon gospel terms. This puts us *into* him. Now no hypocrite doth this. He

may profess to do it in word and tongue, but that is all.

5. They, and none but they, are owned by him as true branches. To others he says, *Depart from me*, I know you not. What, not know us? We have prophesied, eaten, and drunk in thy name, Matt. vii. 22, 23. Luke xiii. 25—30. Though ye have, yet, if workers of iniquity, depart

Aye, but he calls the honest, upright, obedient, fruitful people, his friends, his children, his brethren, John xv. 7.

Show, II. What kind of root Christ is to these branches.

1. A universal root; to all of them; Jew or Gentile; of what kindred, or country, or nation, or language soever they be.

To Old Testament saints. He was Abraham's root, and David's root: a branch from them as man, and yet a root to them as God-man. They were all in him; all saved by him.

To New Testament saints. He was Peter's root, and Paul's root, and thy root, and my root, if we be true believers.

There are two universal roots; and these are the two Adams. The first man Adam was a common root to us all, as men and women. God planted him a noble vine, but he degenerated, and became, to all his posterity, a root of bitterness, bearing gall and wormwood, sin and wrath. When he fell we all fell. But God was pleased to appoint us a second Adam, another root—Jesus Christ—that whosoever believes in him might not perish, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

2. An unseen root. The root of a tree lies invisible, out of sight; we see it not. The tree we see, but not the root. So it is with Christ that

saves us, 1 Pet. i. 8. He was visible many years when, being made flesh, he dwelt among us, but now we see him no more with bodily eyes ; though by an eye of faith we do see him, as it is said of Moses, Heb. xi. 27. The root of other trees is out of sight below ; this root is out of sight above. The church is a great tree inverted, its root is in heaven, its branches here on earth, multitudes of them. It is true there are branches in heaven with their root.

3. An unsightly root. In the root of a tree there is no kind of beauty, or comeliness ; no greenness, as there is in the branches, or fruit ; nothing to commend it to the eye ; it is a despicable thing. So was Christ our root, in his humiliation, Isa. liii. 2. View him in his birth, in the stable ; in his life, not having where to lay his head ; but especially in his death, hanging upon the tree. Would any one think him to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world ? Allude to 1 Samuel x. 27.

4. A strong root. This is one excellency of a root, that it be firm and stable ; sufficient to bear the weight and burthen of the tree and branches that grow upon it, Rom. xi. 18. Our Lord Jesus is a strong Saviour, Ps. lxxxix. 19. Jer. l. 34. Heb. vii. 25. We have need of such a one,

(1.) To satisfy the justice of God for the sins we are guilty of, by undergoing the weight of his infinite wrath. This he did, and no one else could, Ps. xl. 6—8.

(2.) To support and succour us under our temptations. This also he is able to do. Heb. ii. 18. The world tempts, but, be of good cheer, "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. The

devil also, but "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20.

(3.) To save and deliver us from all our enemies ; wicked men, death, and the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.

5. A sappy root. This is another excellency. If a root be withered, and dry, the tree cannot flourish ; how should it ? See Ps. civ. 16. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap."

The sap of this great tree, that keeps it green and flourishing, is the Spirit ; the Spirit of grace. Now Christ the root had the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. Col. i. 19 : according to the promise, Isa. xi. 2. He had a fulness of all the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit : knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, meekness, patience, humility, self-denial. He had them all in *perfection* as God-man. There was in him no mixture of the contrary corruptions.

6. A supplying root. The sap which the root hath, it hath it not for itself, but for the branches. The branches suck and draw from it, and so are maintained in their greenness and fruitfulness. Though the root have it, yet if it do not communicate it the tree is none the better. The Lord Jesus Christ is a communicative root. What he hath of the Spirit he hath for *us*, John i. 16. Ps. lxxvii. 18. compare Eph. iv. 8.

As the sun hath light, the springs and fountains water, the mother milk in her breasts, not for themselves ; so it is here. He is our Joseph, our great corn-master. Joseph did not lay up for his own use, but to supply others. See his gracious invitation to poor sinners, to come to him for what they want, Isa. lv. 1—3. Matt. xi. 28. John vii.

37. Rev. iii. 18. And let us come to him accordingly.

Exhortation I. Suppose we are branches true branches, in Christ the vine, what is to be done?

1. You have cause to be very thankful to the great Husbandman that hath grafted you into him.

Consider, (1.) If he had not done it, it had never been done. We could not have ingrafted ourselves. Godly relations, ministers, could not have done it. No hand but his could have performed it.

(2.) What misery it frees us from. Hereby we are cut off from the wild olive, from the devil's stock and family, from the bondage of his vassals, Rom. xi. 24.

(3.) What privileges it entitles us to. It is a great dignity and honour to be a branch of such a noble vine. Now thou mayest with comfort call God Father, and come to him with boldness, assured of due supplies, of all things needful both for life and godliness. Hereby thou hast right and title to the heavenly inheritance : thy Root will certainly bring thee where he is.

(4.) How unworthy thou wert, and how unlikely for such advancement. Perhaps of mean extraction, less than the least ; perhaps a crooked piece. There are but a few, and thou art one, John xiv. 22. Be not high minded, Rom. xi. 14.

(5.) The time when he did it. Perhaps early in thy days. If so, the time was a time of love, Ezek. xvi. 18.

(6.) By what means. The word, perhaps occasionally heard ; the rod, perhaps working with the word. O say, as David, Ps. ciii. " Bless the Lord, O my soul : and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Say, as Paul, " Now

unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever," 1 Tim. i. 17.

2. Your duty is to take the comfort of it to your souls daily. It is the will of God, that his people should be a comforted people; and what will comfort if this will not; Christ is the vine, and I am one of the branches? If so,

(1.) Then the Father will certainly take care of me; to purge me and prune me, seasonably; for my good, *v. 1, 2.*

(2.) Then I shall be sure not to be cut off, nor cast out, John xvii. 11, 12. Dead branches are easily broken off, nay, blown off, but not living ones. That is, provided I am a fruitful branch. And he will make us fruitful. As it is our duty, so it is his promise.

(3.) Then when I die, I shall be transplanted into God's paradise.

(4.) Then he will reckon with those that lop at these branches, Ps. lxxx. 12.

3. You must abide in him. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John xv. 4—8. There are in these verses three arguments to move us to it. While we abide in him he will abide in

us ; It will be a means of our fruitfulness ; and, We shall have what we will for asking.

What is it to abide in Christ ?

(1.) To abide in the truths of Christ ; to hold them fast, and not to let them go, 2 Tim. i. 13. God only knows how we may be tried as to this matter. The way of popery is an erroneous way in doctrinals ; it is called the lie, and how many poor souls are poisoned by it ! but beware, “lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness,” 2 Pet. iii. 17.

(2.) To abide in the righteousness of Christ. Our own righteousness and Christ’s righteousness are in competition. Now which art thou for ? The Pharisee was for his own, Luke xviii. Paul was for Christ’s, Phil. iii. We have need to look to this daily, in every thing.

(3.) To abide in the love of Christ, Jude 21. John xv. 9. The way to continue in the love of Christ, is to continue in his obedience, *ch.* xiv. 23.

(4.) To abide in the fellowship of Christ. Fellowship with Christ is to be had in the use of his holy ordinances, Cant. i. 7, 8.

4. We must abound in fruit-bearing. This he expects from all the branches that are in him. Leaves will not serve the turn ; it is *fruit* that God looks for. Yet there must be leaves also : a visible profession, Rom. x. 10.

(1.) There must be good fruit, Matt. iii. 10. The fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22—“Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

(2.) Much good fruit, John xv. 8. A little will not serve, though good ; it must bear a proportion to our standing. There is more looked for from

those that have stood long than from others, Heb. v. 12. It must also bear a proportion to our supplies. Where most cost hath been bestowed, most means used, there should be most fruit.

(3.) It must be fruit in season, Ps. i. 3. According to the present circumstances of our condition, Eccl. vii. 14.

O that I knew what to say to move to this. The great controversy that God hath with us at this day is about our fruit; so little is found, that we have reason to fear cutting down, Luke xiii. 7—9. Isa. v. 7.

5. There is duty lying upon us also towards our fellow-branches. Which is,

(1.) As much as in us lies to live in love and peace with them, not envying, judging, despising, boasting—the higher, the lower—the bigger, the lesser—the stronger, the weaker. All branches are not top branches; there should be no provoking, rubbing against, fretting one another Gal. v. 6.

(2.) To promote their growth and fruitfulness. Every one in his place and way; one means of doing this is by Christian communion, Heb. x. 25.

Exhortation II. Suppose we are not yet true branches, is there no hope?

None at all if we continue in that condition. Eph. ii. 12. If without Christ, we are without hope. But if we look about us in time, the matter may be amended. O then be persuaded—To-day, while it is called to-day.

1. Acquaint yourself with the terms of the change; upon what terms you may be Christ's and Christ yours; and accept of them. Many are ignorant and so perish, John iv. 10. The terms are,

(1.) You must be willing to come off from the old stock, the service of sin ; all sin must be renounced ; no more fruit must be brought forth to it.

(2.) You must assent and consent to a new Master ; you must take his yoke upon you. And what harm is there in all this ? O do it.

2. Apply yourself to the great Husbandman, which is the Father ; beg of him to graft you into this vine ; to bestow his Spirit and grace upon you, to be a living principle in you.

3. Assent and consent to the gospel.



CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST IS RAIMENT TO US, AND IT IS OUR DUTY
TO PUT HIM ON.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. xiii. 14.

THE same that was said when our Lord told his hearers he must be their food, and they must eat his flesh—*This is a hard saying*, John vi. 60.—may be said concerning this of Paul here—*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Is Christ a garment, a coat ? It seems he is.

Food and raiment are the two great requisites for our bodies, which if we have we are commanded to be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 8. The same two things must be had also for the soul, food and raiment ; spiritual food, and spiritual raiment. And what is that ? I answer, Jesus Christ ; he is our

food, and he is our raiment, and if we have him we may well be content ; nay, joyful, and cheerful, and thankful ; but, alas ! how many are there that mind not these things, that are carking and caring *what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal* they shall be clothed, as to their bodies, their perishing part, but mind not what becomes of their souls, their precious, their heaven-born souls, whether they be fed or no, clad or no.

The apostle here would have it to be otherwise, “ Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” But in Gal. iii. 37. he speaks as if all that were baptized had put on Christ already ; “ For as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ.”

There are two ways of putting him on—in *profession*, in word and tongue—in *power*, in deed and truth. Of the former it is intended in Galatians—so we have all put him on when we were baptized. Of the latter in Romans—oh that we would all be persuaded so to put him on.

Show, I. What of Christ is the garment that we must put on.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a garment ; what kind of garment he is.

III. Why and how we are to put him on.

I. What of Christ is the garment that we must put on.

Two things in Christ are the garment : His merit and righteousness ; we must *put on* this for our justification. His Spirit and grace ; we must *put on* this for our sanctification.

Justification and sanctification are our two great concernments. It is necessary that we be justified, and that we be sanctified. Now neither of these can possibly be had otherwise than by put

ting on Christ. There is no justification but by his merit, no sanctification but by his Spirit. See 1 Cor. vi. 11. And therefore should we not, by all means, put him on?

1. His merit and righteousness for justification. Justification hath two things in it :

(1.) Acquitting us from guilt. We have all sinned; have we not? Yes. And is not God thereby offended? Yes. And must he not be atoned, and pacified; his justice satisfied? Yes. But how? By any thing that we ourselves can do or suffer? No. By any thing that any of our fellow-creatures can? No. How then? Only by the dying and rising again of the blessed Jesus; “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,” Rom. iv. 25. His blood alone satisfies and pacifies; therefore, his blood alone justifies. And that blood is the garment that we must *put on*, else no atonement. *Put it on!* What is that? hear, talk, of it? No. Stand by, and look upon it? No. Hearing of clothes is not putting on clothes; looking at clothes is not. So here,

To put him on, is to receive and apply him to ourselves by a true and lively faith. Believing him both able and willing to redeem and save me, and thereupon coming to him, and closing with him; and upon my so doing, persuading myself that God for his sake doth forgive me, and thereupon comforting myself; being of good cheer. It is called receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 1, 9—11. Till this be done thy soul is naked in the sight of God, *the shame of thy nakedness appears*; that is, thy sins are all upon the score: thou art guilty, and God is angry, and if thou shouldst die in that condition thou wilt be certainly lost, and

that for ever. Doth it not concern us then to *put on Christ*, to believe in him for justification from the guilt of sin?

(2.) Accepting of us as righteous. Some will have this to be no part of our justification, but the former only. I think justification includes this also, according to the definition in the catechism,* “Wherein he *pardons* all our sins and *accepts of us*, as righteous in his sight.” This Paul says he laboured in, 2 Cor. v. 9. Now how may this be? Eph. i. 6. *In the beloved*; that is, in Christ, through his merit and righteousness alone. He hath not only prevailed by what he did and suffered, and is doing, for us that we may be forgiven, and not come into condemnation; but, moreover, that we may come into favour, be loved and owned, be kissed and embraced, our persons accepted, our performances accepted. And how? for any worth or worthiness that is in us or them? No; only in his name, and for his sake, and through his merit; in order to which we must put him on, as Jacob put on the clothes of his brother Esau, Gen. xxvii. 15. when he came for the blessing. Jacob was in no fault; he did not come for a pardon: no, he came for a blessing; but unless he had put on Esau’s clothes he had not had that blessing; but having them on he had it: “And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed,” v. 27. So here, we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, his merit and righteousness; we must come in his name; we must plead what he hath done and

* Commonly called the Assembly’s Catechism, being agreed upon by the assembly of Divines at Westminster, A. D. 1643.

suffered for us, as our elder brother : and then—See, *the smell of my son* ; and then—a *blessing*, else none ; “ *Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the earth,*” *v.* 28. See, also in the story concerning Joseph and his brethren, *Gen.* xlii. 20 ; xliii. 5. No Benjamin, no corn. Now our Benjamin is Christ, or rather, God’s Benjamin, *his Son*, our Brother. In him he is well pleased, and in him *only*, *Matt.* iii. 17 ; xvii. 5. If we come without him, we come without our errand.

2. His Spirit and grace for our sanctification. Besides the clothes we are to appear in before God, which are Christ’s righteousness alone, there are clothes also that we must appear in before men ; yes, and before God too ; and those are Christ’s Spirit and grace ; the new nature, the divine nature. We must be *new creatures*, *2 Cor.* v. 17. New within, and new without ; new in heart, and new in life ; *putting off the old man, and putting on the new*, *Eph.* iv. 24. Now that new man is Christ. If we have not his Spirit, we are none of his, *Rom.* viii. 9. Him, therefore, and his Spirit we must put on ; his image and likeness : being as he was, (*Heb.* vii. 26.) holy ; doing as he did ; walking as he walked, *1 John* ii. 6. Note how it comes in here, *Rom.* xiii. 12, 13. *Cast off the works of darkness*, rioting, drunkenness ; and put on—what ? sobriety, temperance ? no ; but, all in one—the Lord Jesus Christ,—*Jesus*, the Saviour ; *Christ*, anointed to be so ; *Lord*, to rule you.

II. What kind of garment is the Lord Jesus Christ ?

It is a great matter, especially with some, what kind of clothes we wear · that they be tight and

fashionable, and according to our rank and quality ; rather above it than under it, or below it, or short of it : and most commonly those that are most curious and concerned about the clothing of their bodies, are least curious and concerned what clothes their souls have ; it is to them no matter what rags, what filthy rags, they appear in, both before God and man.

Behold, I bring you tidings this day of brave clothes, which may be yours, if you will—each of you—for the putting on. And those are, the *Lord Jesus Christ*; his merit and righteousness to justify you ; his Spirit and grace to sanctify you. What say you ? Will you accept of them, will you have them, put them on, wear them ?

Tell us, first, what are their properties, that should commend them to us ?

In general—In Luke xv. 22. it is called the *best robe*. Best indeed ; no other is to be compared with it. Brown bread and the gospel are good fare ; rags and Christ's righteousness are good clothing. It is first in worth and excellency, and first in order of time—though not as to our persons, yet as to our nature, in Adam.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a costly garment ; the dearest and most costly garment that ever was. We may judge of its excellency by its price. Some people are extraordinarily profuse about their clothes ; and are cautioned against it, 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3.

Lo, here is a costly robe indeed ; not to us that must wear it, (it costs us nothing but the accepting and putting it on,) but to him that made and prepared it ; it cost him dear. Ere the Lord Jesus Christ could be a suit of clothes for thy soul—to justify, sanctify, save thee, he must be made a

man. And so he was. He must die the death of the cross. And so he did. We read, Gen. xxxvii. of Joseph's brethren dipping their brother's coat in a goat's blood, and sending it to their father; but our Joseph dipt the coat that was to be for us in *his own* blood, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And doth not this commend it to you? He clothed himself with the rags of our nature, that he might clothe us with the robe of his grace: nay, more than that—he was made sin for us, a curse for us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

2. He is a comely garment. There are some persons whose clothes, in the eyes of sober men, are very uncomely; disfiguring, rather than adorning, the body; discovering, rather than hiding, their shame. But here is a garment comely indeed, beautiful, and lovely, and glorious; a garment that makes the soul that hath it on amiable towards God: he is pleased with it, and accepts of it.

The imputed righteousness of Christ doth so. The implanted righteousness is called *grace*, that is, beauty. See what is said of one particular grace, 1 Pet. iii. 4, 5. Could we but see a soul out of Christ, that hath not put him on yet, what guilt and filth it lies under, what dirty rags it hath on; we should wonder how it could endure itself, much more how the pure and holy God doth endure it; especially, coming so near him as sometimes they do in holy ordinances, Amos v. 21. “*I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.*” See Ezek. xvi. where is set forth, both our miserable, loathsome condition by nature, v. 4—8. and our lovely amiable condition by grace, v. 10—

14. though what is said is meant chiefly of their church privileges.

3. He is a large garment. The righteousness of Christ for justification is so. He is able to save to the uttermost. There is in him merit enough to satisfy for all thy sins, to pay all thy debts. He has incense enough to perfume all thy services. What is said of the bed, Isa. xxviii. 20. is true of all the garments—of all our own righteousness—they are too short and too narrow ; thy nakedness appears through them.

The Spirit and grace of Christ for sanctification is so. As he forgives all thy iniquities, and hath wherewithal, so he will heal all thy diseases, mortify all thy corruptions. There is a perfection of parts in sanctification : the *whole* man is renewed, though not yet *wholly*, 1 Thess. v. 23. but as light in a morning—all the sky over.

4. He is a lasting garment, nay, everlasting. The Israelites had clothes that lasted forty years, and did not wax old ; that was a great while, Deut. viii. 4. But here is a garment which lasts for ever.

The righteousness of Christ for justification is *everlasting* righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. There is a fountain of it that cannot be drawn dry—not a cistern, a laver, Zech. xiii. As long as we shall last sinning, the righteousness of Christ will last satisfying. Abuse not this, at your peril. Rom. vi. 1. “ Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid.”

The grace of Christ is lasting too. Where it is in truth, it is in perseverance. “ Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing,”

Ps. xcii. 13, 14. We read of two sorts of clothes, Gen. iii.—One, of Adam and Eve's making—aprons of fig leaves, *v.* 7. Another, of God's making—coats of skins, *v.* 21. There is a great deal of difference in warmth and in duration. The former may represent our own righteousness, the latter Christ's. The beasts whose skins were used died.

5. He is a white garment ; he is expressly said to be so, Rev. iii. 18. When the angels appeared at any time in human shape, that was the colour their clothes were of, Mark xvi. 5. Acts i. 10. So, when our Lord was transfigured, Matt. xvii. 2. The whiteness signifies two things :

(1.) Innocency and purity. Every justified person clothed with Christ's righteousness is, as it were, innocent before God, Ps. xxvi. 6. So the sanctified are in comparison with others, and it is their duty to labour to be so more and more.

(2.) Joy and gladness, Eccl. ix. 8. He that hath put on Christ, and is accepted of God, hath reason to rejoice all the days of his life ; and he ought to do so, Phil. iv. 4. Isa. lxi. 10.

The woman which John saw, Rev. xii. 1. was clothed with the sun : a shining garment indeed. The priests under the law were clothed in white linen garments ; and see Rev. xix. 8. “ The fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

6. He is the wedding garment ; of such we read, Matt. xxii. 12. It is to be understood of Christ's righteousness imputed. There is no welcome with God without it. It is to be understood, also, of his Spirit and grace implanted ; a suitable frame of heart to gospel privileges. Put on Christ, and thou hast that. And shall not all this prevail to make you in love with it ?

III. How must we put on Christ ?

Three things must be done.

1. There must be a work of conviction wrought upon thy soul. Thou must see thy need of this clothing. Most people, as Laodicea, say, they have need of nothing, and alas ! they have need of every thing ; particularly of good clothes, for they are *naked*. A sinful condition is a naked condition. Thy body is perhaps well enough clothed, decently and warm ; but thy soul is naked, and destitute, and exposed ; dirty, and has nothing to hide it.

2. All that will have these fine clothes must come to Christ, and buy them, Rev. iii. 18. Isa. lv. 1. In buying, there is parting with one thing and receiving another. Canst thou find in thy heart to part with thy rags in exchange for these good clothes ? the rags of thy sins, Rom. xiii. 12—14. Eph. iv. 22—24. the rags of thy own righteousness, Isa. lxxv. 6. See Zech. iii. 3, 4. Were such an offer made thee concerning other clothes, how gladly would it be accepted !

3. Having bought them, that is, made the bargain, and consented to the terms of having them, we must put them on, and wear them. Not as a hat, to put off to every one we meet ; not as a cloak to be worn only when we go abroad ; but as thy inner garment, to be worn next thee ; an upper garment ; and, above all these, as thy entire garment. Christ must be thy all in all ; thy day-clothes, thy night-clothes : put him on daily and duly, constantly and continually. It is a good meditation, when we are putting on our clothes, we must put on bowels of mercies, Col. iii. 12. charity, v. 15. humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. meekness, 1 Pet. iii. 4. or, which includes all, *the Lord Jesus*

Christ. If so, when we die we shall put on better clothes of glory. Christ will never put them off that put him on.



CHAPTER V.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD, THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY.

And he is the head of the body, the church.—
Col. i. 18.

THE union between Christ and his church is twofold : 1. Relative ; like that between persons that are in relation mutually one towards another. Of which kind we have had an account* of fourteen—as he is their Husband, Father, Brother, Friend, Master, Teacher, King, Captain, Physician, Advocate, Shepherd, Bishop, Inhabitant, Keeper. 2. Real. Of which kind there are several : this is the first.

Doctr. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the head, and his church the body.

There is such a kind of union between them and such a kind of relation, as is between the head and the body. Bodies are of several sorts, whereof each have their several head.

1. There is the body politic. And so a kingdom is a body ; and the head of that body is the king, Ps. cx. 6. The church is a spiritual king-

* Alluding to a course of sermons preached by him on the subject.

dom ; the head and king of it, in that sense, is Christ.

2. There is the body natural, and that hath a head joined to it • and one and the same living soul animating that head, and that body, they make together one living man. So here; the head is Christ; the body is the Church. The living soul, which is one, and still the same, animating this head and this body, is the Spirit. So that Christ and his church, being endued with one and the same Spirit, make together one mystical body, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

What church is this meant of? Whether is it—the church visible, consisting of all those good and bad that profess faith in Christ and obedience to him; or—the church invisible, called the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, including those only that are called, and chosen, and faithful, and excluding others? I answer: both, in a different sense, are to be reckoned Christ's body, and Christ the head of both.

1. In respect of *external rule and government*. So Christ is the head of the church visible, and the church visible is his body: nay, he is head of every man, 1 Cor. xi. 3.

All that call themselves Christians do profess, at least in word and tongue, to own the Scriptures as the rule of faith and manners; and what they declare we are to believe concerning God, that, they say, they do believe; and what the Scriptures declare to be duty required of man, that they say they will do.

And this profession makes them members at large of the great body, the church, Gal. iii. 27. “As many of you as have been baptized into

Christ have put on Christ," that is, put on the profession of Christ. And we may plead it with them accordingly. Are not you a Christian, baptized into Christ? How dare you then to carry it at this rate?

2. In respect of *vital influence*. So he is the head of the church invisible only; nay, only of those in it that are effectually called. Though the elect not yet called are to be reckoned his, and he theirs, in purpose and decree, yet none but such to whom it is actually given to receive him to themselves, and to give themselves to him, (Hos. i. 11.) *appointing to themselves one head*—making it their own act and deed, are to be considered his body.

As in the natural body, besides the integral parts, such as hands, arms, legs, back, breast, &c. which make the body, there are oftentimes wens, warts, moles, and other excrescences, which are covered over with the same skin, and are fed and nourished, after a sort, with the same nourishment, and yet are not true parts or members of the body; so it is here, there are many that stick, as it were, to the body of Christ, covered over with the same skin of profession, partake in the same ordinances, and yet after all are but wens, and warts, and moles. They are no living members; they have no true union, nor any true communion, with the Lord Jesus; they are amongst us, but not of us; and the day is coming, when they shall be made manifest. On which account the gospel is compared to a net. See Matt. xiii. 47—50.

There are but two heads of all mankind—Christ and the devil. If thou art not a member of Christ, thou art a limb of the devil, that spirit that work.

eth in the children of disobedience. O tremble at the thought of it ; for yourself ; for your near and dear relations, your children ; and make sure your true union with Christ as your head ; make sure that you have his Spirit.

Show, I. What kind of head Christ is.

II. What kind of body the church is.

III. What kind of members of that body we should every one of us be.

I. What kind of head is Christ ?

This I shall lay before you in several particulars.

1. Christ is to his church the only sovereign and supreme head. The head hath the pre-eminence in the body ; it is placed by nature uppermost, and all the rest of the members below it. The Lord Jesus is uppermost, above all, and *over all*, Rom. ix. 5. It follows here, *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence* : the pre-eminence is his above all persons in all things, Ps. xlv. 2. Cant. v. 10. It is our duty then in all things to give him that which is his due. Let nothing rob him of it ; Ps. cxxxvii. 6. “ If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy ”—Hebrew—*the head of my joy*. Make the Lord Jesus the head of your love, hope, desire, delight. Many stand in competition with him, as the world, sin, self, the devil. Also, the Antichrist. He styles himself the head of the church universal, but it is a usurpation. The church hath no head but Christ ; no ministerial head ; none is deputed by him for that office, himself alone being sufficient for it.

We do acknowledge, in a sense, the supreme magistrate may be styled the head, that is, the

governor in external matters of that part of the church which is in his dominions ; as the head of the woman is said to be the man, 1 Cor. xi. 3. that is, her superior to rule over her in the Lord. But *such* a Governor of the *universal* church we know none.

2. Christ is a suitable head ; a head suitable to the body of which he is head. The body hath the human nature, therefore, so hath he, Heb. ii. 14. It was necessary it should be so, that the same nature that sinned might suffer. We may here take occasion to adore the infinite wisdom of the Father, that contrived this way, and the infinite love of the Son, that would stoop so low, Ps. viii. 4, 5.

3. Christ is a supplying head. He nourishes and cherishes, Eph. v. 29, 30. The head in the body supplies the body with two things especially ;

With spirits. It is the seat of spirits, from whence they are derived to all the parts as there is need and occasion. The Lord Jesus is said to have the seven spirits, Rev. iii. 1, that is, abundance of the Spirit ;—compare John iii. 34. Col. i. 19. Eph. i. 23.—and that to communicate, *ch.* i. 16. Ps. cxxxiii. 2. To him, therefore, we must have recourse.

With guidance and direction. The office of the head is to show the body whither to go, and what to do : there the eyes are seated, as in a watch tower. See Rev. v. 6. *Seven eyes.* Whereinsoever we have need at any time of guidance, we must look to him, as Paul, Heb. xii. 6. and we have a promise, Ps. xxxii. 8. “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye.”

4. A sympathizing head. He is such a head

as hath a fellow-feeling with all his true members, even the meanest of them, in all the evils that befall them. In the evils of temptation, Heb. ii. 17, 18; iv. 15, 16. In the evils of affliction, Isa. lxiii. 9. In the evils of persecution, Acts ix. 4. When the toe was but trod upon, the head cried out, Why persecutest thou me? This affords great comfort and encouragement, good ground of hope that he will arise for their rescue, Isa. lxiii. 9. Also in their joys and comforts, Matt. xxv. 40.

5. A safe head. If a man be fallen into a pit of water, as long as his head is kept above, he is well. Whatsoever befalls the body, the head is above, out of the reach of gun-shot. It is well for him, it is well for us, that it is so. Men may strike at his headship, but "why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," Ps. ii. 1, 6. Christ is far above "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," Eph. i. 21.

6. A saving head. Being safe himself he will in due time make us safe too, Eph. v. 23. He is Jesus, Matt. i. 21.—*a Saviour*. It is his *prayer*, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24. Though the head and members are parted a while, yet they shall be together for ever. Salvation is either personal, or public; temporal, spiritual, or eternal; according as the evils are that do encompass us; sins, sorrows, temptations. 2 Tim. iv. 18—"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve

me unto his heavenly kingdom." In the head are the eyes, to spy dangers ; the mouth, to speak for help ; the wisdom and understanding, to contrive which way to effect it.

II. What kind of body is the church ?

1. It is a great body. This appears if we consider those only that are called, and chosen, and faithful ; though who those be is not, and cannot be, infallibly known to us. Even they, at this day, now living in the world, are not a few but many. Indeed, comparatively, compared with them that perish, the Scripture says of them, they are but a little little flock ; yet in themselves they are many. And the Lord make them a hundred fold more than they are.

It appears also, if we consider the whole professing body of Christians, that are baptized into the faith of Christ. Then they are a great many more.

And it appears further, if we consider all that have been, and are, and shall be, as met together with their head in glory. See what account the Scripture gives of them, Rev. vii. 9. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Therefore there is no reason why any should stumble at the paucity or fewness of the people of God.

2. It is a growing body. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," Isa. ix. 7. There are many promises in the word to this purpose which have had, and have, and shall have, their accomplishment. Growth is two-fold :

(1.) Extensive. When more are added. More to the number of the elect, we believe, are not to be added. They who teach, "If thou art not predestinated, pray that thou mayest be predestinated," do certainly miss it; but to the number of the called, there may be more added, (Acts ii. 47.) with a common call, with an effectual call; and our duty is to pray heartily every day that we may be so.

(2.) Intensive. When those that are already good, and are in the body, are made better; better in heart, and better in life. This is often promised as a mercy, and as often commended as a duty, Mal. iv. 2. Prov. iv. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Pet. i. 5—8.

3. It is a divided body. The more is the pity, but so it is. A great part of it is divided from the head. I mean, not in respect of unity of spirit and affection; so all the true members are near to him, and he is near to them; but in respect of place and condition. He is in heaven above, they are on the earth beneath; and it is their grief and burthen that it is so; and, therefore, they pray, and long, and wait till it be otherwise, Phil. i. 23. Rev. xxii.

It is also divided, sadly divided, within itself; not divided from the wicked of the world only, that is a division that must be, but the body within itself; Christian against Christian, church against church; nay, I would I might not say, saint against saint. But then, observe, it is not in fundamental matters; all are agreed to love God, and hate sin, and believe in Jesus Christ, and keep the commandments. The difference lies in some lesser matters; as that between Paul and Barnabas about John Mark going along with

them ; Paul and Peter about eating or not eating with the Gentiles ; about meats and days, wherein the kingdom of God consists not.

And the truth is, the evil lies more in the mismanagement of their differences than in the differences themselves. The fault is, either despising or judging. There is hope the Lord in due time will mend this matter, as Christ hath prayed, John xvii.

4. It is a distempered body. This is one reason of the former ; therefore so divided because so distempered. If it were not for the distempers that are in the body, there would be no such divisions in the body, James iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. The distempers that prevail are, ignorance, darkness, want and weakness of judgment in the understanding, which cause error and mistake ; also pride, passion, self-love, ambition, covetousness. These are the diseases of this great body. The man of sin with his great lie, the whore with her fornication cup, have deceived, deluded, intoxicated the nations ; and when they will come to themselves, and be thoroughly sober, God only knows.

5. It is a persecuted body. Look how it was with the natural body of our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth ; even just so it is, and hath been, with his mystical body : he was scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, torn with nails, speared with spears, nailed to the cross ; even so hath it been with his followers. We may wonder, the enemies of it being so many, mighty, and malicious, that they have not made an utter end of it before this time. That complaint of the Psalmist, Ps. iii. 1. may well be the whole church's complaint, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me ! many are they that rise

up against me." But why doth the head suffer it to be so, when it is certainly in the power of his hand to help it? I answer, there is good reason for it, else it should not be. He knows how to make it work for good to them, and for glory to himself.

6. It shall be a prevailing body: allusion to Gen. xlix. 23, 24. See Zech. xii. 1, 3, 6.

Not a member shall perish: a good argument for the perseverance of saints. Lord, if in thy book all thy members are written, much more are all thine.

— The body natural was so, in its glorious transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, coronation in glory; and so in its kind, and measure, and time, shall the body mystical be also, Isa. xxvi. 19. See Ezek. xxxvii.

III. What kind of members of this body should we be?

As to ourselves; we must look to it,

1. That we be true members, that we have true union with this blessed head; and that must be by a true and lively faith, accepting of him and giving ourselves to him, Eph. iii. 17. Is this done? Is it done in deed and in truth? I beseech you, see to it; many are tied to Christ by an outward profession, that are not grafted into him. There may be glass eyes, and wooden legs fastened by art to the body, and those wooden legs may have silk stockings, and yet they are not of the body. So *as to ourselves*. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. vii. 21.

2. That we be thriving members. If a member in the body do not grow, it is a sign something is

amiss in it, Col. ii. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 1. This is one end wherefore the means of grace are afforded to us, Eph. iv. 11—15. They do grow indeed that do grow up into Christ the head more and more ; into his merit, into his Spirit, for justification, for sanctification. Yet note, every part hath a proportionable measure of growth, though what that is we know not, and therefore, we are still to be pressing forward.

As to our head ; our duty stands in,

1. Subjection. If he be our head we must be subject to him in all things : our will subject to his will in doing, in suffering. What he appoints concerning his day, his worship, his discipline, we are readily and cheerfully to submit to ; taking his yoke upon us. Though commands be hard and uneasy to the carnal part, are they his commands ? If so, we must obey. So also for providences,—“ And Jesus said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me,” Luke ix. 23.

2. Similitude. The members ought to be like the head. In Dan. ii. we read of an image, whose head was gold, and the members silver, brass, iron, nay clay. It must not be so in Christ's body,—“ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” “ Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,” Rom. viii. 9, 29. See how the apostle argues as to this : “ Know ye not, that your members are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot ? God forbid !” 1 Cor. vi. 15. O think, when a temptation to sin comes, is

this to be like Christ ? Was Christ passionate, or revengeful, or covetous ?

3. Sympathy. As the head sympathizes with the members, so the members sympathize with the head. If a blow be offered at the head, the hand will venture a cut to save it. Are we affected with the dishonour done to the Lord Jesus by the wickedness that abounds in the midst of us ? do we lay it to heart ? do we feel the contempt cast upon his name, his gospel, his ministers, his people ? The Psalmist could say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," Ps. lxi. 9.

As to our fellow-members ; our duty stands in these seven things :

1. Charity, brotherly kindness, and love towards them all. All the members in the natural body love one another ; so should all the members in the mystical body : and that love must be unfeigned, and without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9, 10.

2. Care not to hurt any of them in word or deed. Eph. iv. 25 *Lie not.* Why ? *because members one of another.* The hand will not take a knife and cut the leg or the foot ; nor will the teeth bite the arm ; no, not though accidentally hurt ; there is no revenge. So should it be among Christians, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," Rom. xii. 19. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," Gal. v. 14, 15.

3. Contentment in that place in the body in which God hath set us, though a mean and low

place. Not envying those that are above us, or are preferred before us, in parts, gifts, estate, employment, Gal. v. 26. The foot envies not the hand, nor the leg the arm, because the hand and the arm are nearer the head..

4. Condescension. If we be in a high place in the body, we should be condescending to those that are below ; not slighting, despising, or undervaluing, 1 Cor. xii. 21, 22. Rom. xii. 16. 1 Pet. v. 5.

5. Compassion towards all. We are to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice. The members in the natural body do so, 1 Cor. xii. 26. Heb. xiii. 3. *In the body mystical* it should be so.

6. Communion, free and frequent. In the natural body the members are always together. We cannot be so in the body mystical : our condition is a scattered condition, till gathered together in heaven, 2 Thess. ii. 1. 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. But it should be the case as much as may be, Heb. x. 25.

7. Communication. Whatever each member hath, it hath it not for itself, but for the body. The eye, the ear, the hand, are not for themselves merely ; so it should be with the body mystical, not every man for himself, but for others also, Phil. ii. 4, 21. Eph. iv. 16. Hereby also we may try ourselves, whether we are true members.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST IS OUR HOPE.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.—
1 Tim. i. 1. latter part.

DOES any one inquire, What is Christ to us? I reply, He is our foundation—our food—our root—our raiment—our head—and our hope. Hope hath in Scripture two significations:

1. It signifies the *grace of hope*, which is the expectation of some good thing to come; Prov. x. 28. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;” that is, their hoping hath a good issue. And it signifies,

2. *The object of hope.* So in the text.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian’s hope—the object of his hope.

All the good that we look for, we do and look for only from, by, and through, our Lord Jesus Christ. Others may possibly make other things the object of their hope, but we must make the Lord Jesus Christ alone the object of our hope. I shall

Show, I. What the things are that we do hope for by, from, and through Jesus Christ.

II. What in Christ we do make the grounds of that hope.

III. What the success of that hope is, and how we are like to speed in it.

IV. Whence it is that we speed so well.

V. Make application.

I. What are the things that we hope for by from, and through our Lord Jesus Christ ?

They are in general of two sorts :

1. Things that concern the life that now is, that pertain to the body, and to the outward man. We have occasion for these, and shall have, while we are in the body. Now which way must we look for them ? who must be our hope ? Not any creature, one or other ; not second causes ; if they be, they will deceive and disappoint us ; but our Lord Jesus Christ himself alone. Every good man says, *He* is my hope, Prov. xviii. 10, 11. Ps. lii. 7 ; xx. 7, 8. It sweetens all such mercies, that they come from, and through, such a good hand. We must exercise this hope.

(1.) In all our wants and necessities, for supply of them. If we want food, raiment, rain, fair weather, success in business, health from sickness, ease from pain, he alone must be our hope ; and if he be so, he will see to us, Ps. xxiii. 1 ; xxxiv. 10 ; xxxvii. 3. Luke xxii. 35.

(2.) In all our perils and dangers ; for preservation from them, for preservation through them, Ps. iii. 5, 6 ; xxiii. 4. When the ship was sinking wherein Paul was :—See the narrative, Acts xxvii. 22, &c.

(3.) In all our straits and troubles ; for support under them, for deliverance out of them, Ps. xxxiv. 19 ; lv. 22.

(4.) Concerning our children after us, when we are gone, Ps. xxvii. 10. Jer. xlix. 11.

(5.) In reference to public affairs, that he will fight our battles for us, and give us victory over all our enemies. See Josh. v. 13.

2. Things that concern the life that is to come—spiritual things, eternal things. For these, also,

our hope must be in Christ, and in him only ; 2 Pet. i. 3. " His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life," namely, life present, " and godliness." For,

The grace itself that makes us godly is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is he that sanctifies, his Spirit that regenerates ; Heb. xii. 2. "*The Author and Finisher of our faith ;*" the gold is his, and the eye salve his.

The forgiveness of our sins and the justification of our persons, is through Christ, Rom. v. 1 ; viii. 1. Eph. i. 7.

The acceptance of our services—audience for our prayers, is for his sake, 1 Pet. ii. 5. John xvi. 23.

So ability and strength both for doing and suffering. We can do nothing further than he enables, John xv. 5. nothing ; nor undergo any thing if his arm be not under us.

A blessing upon ordinances is through his presence with us in them, Matt. xviii. 20 ; xxviii. 20.

Victory over spiritual enemies, corruptions, temptations, the devil, the world, the flesh, is through him, Rom. viii. 37.

The pouring out of the Spirit as a Comforter, is on his account, John xiv. 16.

So persevering grace is from him : it is by his power we are kept, 1 Pet. i. 3.

A safe and comfortable passage out of this into the other world, is the effect of his presence, Ps. xxiii. 4. He will send his angels, Luke xvi. 22. And, when we come thither, good entertainment there,—that we shall be acknowledged and acquitted, that he will say, Well done—give us a place in his kingdom, Matt. x. 32. Jude 24. John xiv. 2, 3.

The raising up of our bodies at the last day is because of him, John xi. 25. "I am the resurrection." And this is promised, John vi. 39, 40. But how? See 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

Soul and body shall be together in eternal happiness, with all the saints and with the Lord; and here is the top-stone of the great building. And is this by Christ? Yes: by Christ. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv. 19. *In this life*, but not in this life only, else, of all creatures most miserable. Now all these together are great things. Then,

(1.) The saints of God are people of great hopes, that look for all this. They are great dealers; they trade not, as the men of the world do, for pebbles, but for rich pearls; for a kingdom, an eternal kingdom. O that all such would learn to carry it accordingly, that it might appear by their behaviour in every thing, that they are of a great spirit, and of great designs, as Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26.

(2.) The Lord Jesus Christ is a great Saviour, that hath wherewithal to answer the hopes of such abundance of people, trusting to him and expecting from him, to be made thus happy by him, and to have all this from him. We may wonder whence the king hath to maintain such armies, and whence to reward his friends that are faithful to him, and do him service, but how much more cause to wonder whence the Lord Jesus Christ hath to reward his faithful servants.

(3.) The men of the world are great fools, that when such a great happiness may be had, in the heavenly Canaan, they prefer the onions and garlic of Egypt before it; as the old Israelites did,

despising the pleasant land, Ps. cvi. 24. a sin that God did never forgive them, but charged it upon them, so that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. And the case is the very same as to those that despise the grace of the gospel, and the rich offers of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, Heb. ii. 3 ; iii. 17 ; iv. 1.

II. What in Jesus Christ do we make the grounds of our hope touching all these things.

There is ground enough and enough, again and again. We know whom we have trusted, and in whom we have hoped ; and why, Heb. vi. 19, 20. Hope is there compared to an anchor, the use whereof is to keep the ship steady in storms. What kind of anchor ? Sure and steadfast, not weak and wavering. How so ? It *enters within*, fastens upon Christ in heaven ; not upon mud or sand, or other loose ground, but upon a rock, Isa. xxviii. 16.

Three things we have in him to bottom our hopes upon :

1. The price he has paid to procure and purchase them : that was, his own blood ; a price sufficient, a price accepted by the Father. They are all bought and paid for, yea, and paid for to the full worth and value of them. If a friend of ours have purchased an estate for us, we feel confidence. Behold a friend, “ who though he was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,” 2 Cor. viii. 9. Have we not then good grounds for hope ? nay, for joy in hope ? Rom. v. 2.

2. The promise he hath made to bestow it. There is nothing of all these blessings and benefits, but what he hath expressly told us in his holy word, shall be certainly conferred upon us, if we

will believe in him, and be ruled by him, Matt. xii. 28, 29. John x. 28. But may we trust him? Is he faithful? Will he not deceive us? I answer, There is no danger. Hadst thou as many souls as thou hast hairs upon thy head, thou mightest venture them all upon his bare word; but for our more abundant consolation we have his *oath*, Heb. vi. 18. his bond with two seals, Rom. iv. 11. And shall we yet distrust hope?

3. His being present always at the right hand of the Father, making intercession, that he may see it all done accordingly, Heb. vii. 25. If a legacy be left me by a dear friend, and he trust executors with it that are false, I may lose it that way, notwithstanding his good intention—as with many an orphan; but there is no danger of that here. Our Lord himself hath so ordered the matter that he is his own executor. Then certainly he will see his will performed: then we have good ground of hope if able to make out our title.

III. How are we likely to speed in our hopes?

Many hope for great things, and fall short. Here there is no danger, “Hope maketh not ashamed”—their hope, Rom. v. 5.—the grace of hope, or the object of hope—Jesus Christ; neither of them *makes them ashamed*; that is, they are sure not to be disappointed, they shall certainly have the things they look for. The reason follows, namely, either God’s love to them, in the sense of it, *shed abroad in our hearts*, or their love to God. Because he loves them and they love him, therefore no disappointment. I dare challenge all the ages of the world, and all the records of time, and all the people that ever lived upon the face of the earth, to produce one instance of one person that made the Lord Jesus Christ

rightly and truly his hope, that was disappointed ; disappointed of pardon, peace, acceptance with God, and eternal life at last ; or, disappointed as to the things of this life, unless they hoped amiss. Our rule in hoping, is to hope *according to the promise* ; else we may hope amiss. The promise being with proviso, as far as for God's glory and our good, such must the hope be, Ps. xci. 10.—no evil shall befall, Ps. xxxiv. 10—no good wanting.

IV. Whence is it we may be so certain we shall not be disappointed, if the Lord Jesus Christ be our hope ?

Because he is what he is according to these three titles given here to him :

1. He is Jesus a Saviour, one raised up on purpose to bring people to heaven. The very name encourages hope.

2. He is Lord ; Jehovah, blessed for ever ; King of kings and Lord of lords ; almighty in power ; able to save : other hopes are weak and unable.

3. He is Christ ; anointed of God to be both Lord and Jesus ; him hath God the Father sealed, that is, commissioned under hand and seal, and also fitted every way for the undertaking, Acts x. 38.

V. What use should we make of this ?

1. Then if Christless, we are hopeless, Eph. ii. 12. Not absolutely, but while remaining in that state. For let me ask, What is thy hope ? I mean especially touching the main matter, thy eternal salvation ? Hast thou ever any thoughts about it ? —It is for the most part grounded upon a purposed repentance and reformation hereafter, on our part, and on God's part, a little mercy, which a good God will not deny, for a good man would

not. This is all that the most trust to ; but this will certainly deceive, Job xxvii. 8. Prov. xi. 7. Matt. vii. 24—27. It hath deceived thousands, and will thee.

2. Then saints are blessed ; for the Lord Jesus Christ is their hope, Ps. cxlvi. 5. Why then not comforted, having such things in hope, in reversion ; besides in hand, in possession ?

3. Then try your hopes, and be sure they be right, else expect disappointment. How were they wrought ? If born with thee, and you never did otherwise than hope, suspect that hope. The foundation of *good* hope is laid in a kind of despair ;—no hope in the way I am in, therefore I must have a better foundation. How do they work ? Is it in a constant care to please God—fear to offend him ? then they are right, Acts xxvi. 7. Do they lead to self-purifying ? 1 John iii. 3. Do they produce love to the Lord Jesus ? It cannot be otherwise if you have a good hope.

4. Exhortation to all to make Christ alone their hope, renouncing all other, Ps. lxxiii. 25, especially their own righteousness, Phil. iii. 7, 8.

5. Caution. Do not say there is no hope ; for, blessed be God, there is while Christ lives.

CHAPTER VII.

HE IS OUR REFUGE.

Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Heb. vi. 18.

THESE words are a description of true believers, such to whom belong the *strong consolation*; that is, who ought to be greatly comforted. They are such as have fled for *refuge* to lay hold on the hope set before them. The same that is the *hope*, is the *refuge*, namely, Jesus Christ, and his undertaking for us. True believers are such as fly to him—for two reasons :

1. In reference to what is to come, to lay hold on the *hope* set before them; that is, the hope laid up for them in heaven, Col. i. 5. and *set before* them in the gospel, together with all the benefits purchased for them in their way thither.

2. In reference to what is present. They fly to him for *refuge* every day, and they have need so to do.

Doct. That the Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian's refuge, to whom he must fly every day.

Show, I. What is meant by refuge.

II. What need we have of a refuge every day.

III. What kind of refuge Jesus Christ is.

IV. What it is to fly to him for refuge, and what should move us so to do.

I. What is meant by a refuge? A *refuge* is that which men are wont in times of trouble or danger to betake themselves to, for safety or sup

ply, promising themselves that there they shall have it. Refuges are of two sorts.

The one *personal*. Sometimes there are such and such persons in whom we confide, and from whom we expect shelter, a near and dear relation, a trusty faithful friend. We call him our refuge, and make him so, if we want any thing, if any thing ail us. Jonathan was David's refuge in his flight from Saul. Jephtha was the Gileadites' refuge, Judges xi. Magistrates are the poor man's refuge, the shields of the earth.

The other *real*. There are things that are our refuge; as, in time of war, a strong castle or walled town; there we conclude we shall be safe. Against want, the rich man's wealth is his strong city, Prov. xviii. 11. In case of guilt and justice pursuing: Joab fled to the horns of the altar; that was his refuge. The Jews, by God's appointment, had six cities of refuge, to which the manslayer was to fly. Now to these the apostle is supposed here especially to allude. As they had their refuges, so have we; theirs were so many cities, but ours is one, Christ.

II. What need have we of a refuge every day?

We need a refuge on a four-fold account:

1. Guilt contracted. We are sinning daily, besides old scores. The avenger of blood, that is, God's offended justice, is in pursuit of us, at our very heels, though we see him not. If he overtake us before we get into Christ we are undone. If we trust to other refuges, if we take hold of the horns of any other altar, he will pluck us thence, as they did Joab, and away we must go to execution. It is for every sin that this is our case; for the law says, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book*

of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. O what need have we then to bethink ourselves !

2. Temptations assaulting. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are all busy, by fair means, by foul, by allurements, by affrightments ; setting upon us, to draw us *from* God and duty, *to* sin and folly. Temptations are sometimes of one kind, sometimes of another. Now the query is, Where is our refuge ? whither go we for strength, for safety ? To something in ourselves ? or, as David against Goliath, in the name of the Lord of hosts, in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ ?

3. Troubles befalling. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it ; one event or other happens that crosses and grieves us. Now have we no refuge, nothing to betake ourselves to, that may help to bear us up ? One says, I have a father and mother to look after me. Another—I have a friend that will not see me want. But, says the believer, I have a refuge beyond them all, and that is Christ.

4. Dangers threatening. Besides what present evils we meet with, there are others that we have prospect of, afar off. And many times, the very fear of them is more grievous than they themselves are when they come. Now against these, also, Christ Jesus is, and ought to be, a Christian's refuge, Ps. lvi. 3 ; cxii. 7. O be convinced of this, that upon all these accounts you have need of a refuge. Till this is done all I shall say will be to no purpose. " What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far ? to whom will ye flee for help ? and where will ye leave your glory ? " Isa. x. 3. These are good questions.

III. What kind of refuge is Jesus Christ ?

He is a refuge that hath these properties ; and they are all desirable in a refuge :

1. He is an appointed refuge ; ordained of God on purpose for us to fly to, in all our ailments. There were many cities in Israel, many in every tribe, but only six appointed for refuge ; and God himself appointed them, not Moses, John iii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 30. We may plead it with him in reference to all his offices, whereinsoever we have need of him, that he is therefore raised up, and sent, and anointed, and sealed, as Priest to satisfy for us, as Prophet to teach us, as King to protect and defend us.

2. He is an able refuge—all sufficient. Many refuges that people fly to, under guilt, under trouble, prove unable to shield and shelter them. Many persons are either feeble and infirm, and cannot, or false and treacherous, and will not. Many things, as strong holds and castles, in time of war are untenable, broken reeds : so Rabshakeh calls Egypt, Isa. xxxvi. 6. and so it proved to God's people, when they trusted to it and relied upon it. “ When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb ; yet could not he heal you, nor cure you of your wound,” Hos. v. 13. Of our Lord Jesus this is said, which is certainly true, “ I have laid help upon one that is mighty,” Ps. lxxxix. 19. “ He is able to save to the uttermost,” Heb. vii. 25. “ In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted,” Heb. ii. 18. Lord, if thou wilt, *thou canst*, says the poor leper, Matt. viii. 2. He *can* acquit from guilt, he *can* secure from danger, he *can* support, and he *can* supply.

3. He is a refuge at hand. If a friend be never

so able to help, if he be far off when we have need of him, what the better are we? "The word is nigh thee," Rom. x. 8. "God is a very present help in trouble," Ps. xlv. 1. "The Lord of hosts is with us," Ps. xlv. 7, 11.—*present with us*. It is a very comfortable consideration when under guilt—wounded, to know that the remedy is at hand; when tempted—under prevailing fears of want—in trouble, in danger, to be assured that cities of refuge are so near.

4. He is a universal refuge: *for all persons*. Whosoever will may come, and find shelter with him, Isa. lv. 1. *every one*, Rev. xxii. 17. *whosoever will*, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor. God hath no where excluded thee; then do not thou exclude thyself. Cities of refuge were for strangers, not Israel only.

He is a refuge *in all cases*, inward or outward, bodily or spiritual. Let the offence be what it will, he hath merit for the pardon of it. Let the temptation be what it may, he hath strength to overcome it. Let the danger be ever so threatening, he can save from it. There was a limitation in the cities of refuge; they were only for the manslayer; the thief, the highwayman, the adulterer had no city; but in Christ there is a refuge for the most guilty. "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13. "And such," referring to the awful list before enumerated, "were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11.

5. He is an unchangeable refuge, Heb. xiii. 8. The six cities of refuge in the land of Canaan are passed away, and gone, and are refuges no more;

so is also many a strong fort and tower ; but our refuge is still what he was, and where he was, Heb. vii. 24. Ps. xxvii. 10 ; cxlvi. 3, 5, 10.

6. He is an open refuge. If a refuge be never so near us, if it be shut against us, what the better are we ? If the castle bridge be drawn up, what can it avail us ? Our Lord Jesus is an open Saviour, Zech. xiii. a *fountain open*—not sealed and shut up. His eye is always open to see and behold us ; his ear, to hear our prayers ; his arms, to receive and embrace us ; his hand, to give, to supply us ; his doors, to bid us welcome. O that we were as open to him as he is to us, Ps. xxiv. He calls and calls again, Cant. v. 1.

7. He is the only refuge. Besides him there is no other ;—none in heaven, none on earth ; none within us, none without us, Isa. xl. 6—8.

None for *justification*. When we have sinned what other way is there of making atonement ? Can saints and angels do it ? Can our own righteousness ? Then Paul would never have renounced his, as he did, though far beyond ours : his anxiety was to be found in him, Phil. iii. 8, 9. as the malefactor in the city of refuge.

None for *strength* ; either to do duty or to resist temptation. Paul says, he could do all through Christ strengthening him, but nothing in and of himself. We are more than conquerors only in him, Rom. viii.

None in all our *outward concerns*, public or personal, Ps. lxii. 5—8 ; cxlvi. 3—5.

IV. What is it to fly to him for refuge, and what should move us so to do ? If Christ be such a refuge, and the only such, then what is the reason so few come to him for refuge ?

1. 'The reason is, they do not know him ; their

minds are blinded ; they will not believe the report of the gospel concerning him, John iv. 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said unto thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

2. They are deluded with false refuges : they have other things to trust to ; one to this, another to that, Ps. xx. 7. Prov. xviii. 11. Isa. xxviii. 15. When God shall send them hereafter to the refuges they have chosen, O the shame and confusion that will then follow ! as Judges x. 14. “ Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen ; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. The righteous when they see it shall laugh, Ps. lii. 6, 7.

3. They do not feel their need of a refuge, Prov. iii. 17.

If others however will not, let *us* make him *our* refuge and fly to him accordingly.

1. *What is it to fly to Christ for refuge ?*

(1.) It is to *betake ourselves to him*. Behold, he calls, *Come unto me* ; let thy soul answer, *Lo, I come*. Come for pardon of all thy sins ; come for righteousness wherein to appear before God ; come for mercy, grace, peace, strength, comfort, quickening ; yea, come with boldness, Heb. iv. 16.

(2.) It is to *lay hold* on him, so the word is here, by a true and a lively faith.

As a man sinking lays hold on a bough, cord, plank, cast out to save him.

As Joab laid hold on the horns of the altar, when Solomon sent to slay him, 1 Kings ii. 28.

As we lay hold on the opportunity of a good bargain, when it is offered to us ; closing with it, accepting of it, deliberately, sincerely, freely, and

for ever. This is believing : and you that have thus taken hold keep your hold ; let not Satan, nor unbelief, beat thee off ; say, Either at this door I must have salvation, or perish for ever. Necessity oftentimes makes them strong that are otherwise weak. When life lies upon it, and I must either hold fast or die, strength is summoned.

(3.) It is to do it *with all speed*. Flying is the swiftest motion of all other : such should ours be to Christ,—I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments, Ps. cxix. 60.—for three reasons ;

The imminency of our danger. The avenger of blood is at thy heels ; if he overtake thee short of Christ, thou art undone for ever.

The uncertainty of our life. We are here to-day, and gone to-morrow : no time is ours but the present time, 1 Cor. vi. 2.

The uncertainty of the offer of this refuge. Many a man's day of life is longer than his day of grace, Luke xix. 42. O then bestir thyself ; hoist up sail while the wind blows ; strike while the iron is hot. Do ye think the malefactor pursued would stay to talk and prate with every idle companion ? No : but run with all his might for fear of the worst. So should we : his flight was but to save a temporal life, ours an eternal.

2. *What encouragement have we thus to fly to Christ for refuge.*

(1.) His express call and command, " Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," Matt. xi. 28. Heavy laden,—either with outward burthens, want, sickness, unkindness of relations, or malice of enemies. However it be, make thy case known to him, spread it before him, by

prayer and supplication. Cast thy care upon him ; believe it is that which he knows to be best for thee. He can and will make a way for thee to escape. But then thou must keep his way, not turn aside. Or, heavy laden—with inward pressures of guilt, sense of wrath, prevailing fears. Come to me, says he, as to thy refuge ; I will relieve thee and succour thee, Isa. l. 10.

(2.) The experience of the saints of God in all ages, who have found him a ready refuge to them in all their troubles, Ps. xxxiv. 4—6. There is no instance to the contrary. No guilty sinner, that repented and believed the gospel, and laid hold by faith on the Lord Jesus, for peace and pardon, ever went without it.—And should not this encourage us ?

Under the law we are told there were officers yearly chosen on purpose to oversee the highways to the cities of refuge, to be sure that they were in good repair, that there was no hinderance, no stumbling-stone, Deut. xix. 3. Besides, they were all Levites' cities. The same is the work of ministers of the gospel now. The command to them is, Isa. xl. 3. *Prepare ye the way.* And wo unto us if it be not done, and a thousand woes to them, that instead of removing stumbling stones out of the way, lay them in the way ; instead of encouraging, discourage.

To conclude. My exhortation is,

1. To all that have not made Christ their refuge, by all means to do it, and that quickly, for delays are dangerous.

2. To those that have ; to be doing it, yet daily, more and more. And when they have done it, in God's name to take the comfort of it. Your consolation should be *strong* consolation, that have

fled for refuge; that is, too strong for all your doubts and fears—prevailing against them and over them. No life is so sweet as theirs that make Christ their refuge at all times, in all things. But then be sure ye are never caught out of him. The malefactors if ever taken out of the refuge were slain. “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end,” Heb. iii. 14.



CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*And this is the name whereby he shall be called,
The Lord our Righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6.*

THAT these words are to be understood of the Messiah, or Saviour, no one doubts that knows the Scripture, Jew or Gentile; but that Jesus of Nazareth is he, the Jew denies, the Christian only believes. He hath many names given him in Scripture; two, in the words foregoing, *v. 5. a righteous Branch; a King, reigning, and prospering; Isa. vii. 14. Immanuel; ix. 6. 7. Wonderful, Counsellor; Matt. i. 21. Jesus.* But among all the rest of his names, none is more sweet than this in the text, the *Lord our Righteousness. The Lord Jehovah*; the incommunicable name of God, never given to any creature, in heaven or earth. By this we prove him to be the infinite and eternal God. What can be plainer? He is

Jehovah, having his being of himself, and giving breath and being to all things, for "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," John i. 3. He is *our righteousness*: what that means you will hear, but this is his name by which he will be known, and this is his memorial unto all generations ; by this name he hath been, is, and shall be, called by all true believers.

Doctr. Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness, and it is our duty to call him so.

Of all that we are to teach, and you are to learn, concerning him, I beseech you learn this, be not ignorant of this.

Show, I. What it means.

II. Prove it duty to call him so.

I. Show what is meant by his being our righteousness. It means,

1. That it is in him alone that God the Father is well pleased. And is that so? Yes: it was declared twice by a voice from heaven, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. Not only *with* whom, but *in* whom, I am well pleased, atoned, pacified, satisfied. I acquiesce in him, without looking any further. Let me have him, and I have enough, I have all. He is God's all in all, and why then should he not be ours? If *he* be well pleased in him, why are not we?

2. That it is by and through him alone that we are justified; that is, acquitted from guilt, and accepted into favour, which are the ingredients of justification.

Acquitted from guilt. Guilty we all are; we know it, we can none of us deny it. Having sinned, we are for our sins justly liable to God's wrath and curse, both in this world and that

which is to come. To be so is to be wretched and miserable ; now how shall we do to be acquitted ? Why, through Jesus Christ only : He is the way, and there is no other, Acts xiii. 38, 39. Were we thoroughly convinced of guilt, we should hearken to this ; it would be thought a word worthy of all acceptation ; and so it is, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Accepted into favour, Eph. i. 6. Rom. v. 1, 2. The grace and favour of God is the creature's happiness ;—want that, and want all ; have that, and have all. Now there can be no hope of this favour but in and by Jesus Christ. The holy God will admit of none into his friendship or fellowship, but those to whom Jesus Christ is made righteousness.

3. It is through his merit and mediation alone that our performances are made acceptable, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As our bad deeds are no otherwise to be expiated, so our good deeds are no otherwise to be accepted. To what purpose is it for any of us to do any thing that is good, if we be not accepted in it ; to pray, hear, give alms, keep the sabbath ? Now it is Christ's righteousness alone that merits that acceptation ; he is the incense that perfumes all.

4. It is by him alone that we have right and title to the heavenly inheritance. It is his purchase ; he bought it with his blood. We had a right by creation upon condition of perfect obedience, but we lost it by our fall in Adam : it is restored only by the second Adam. If he be the Lord our righteousness, we may plead that, and say, Lord, Christ is mine, save me, save me from hell, for I am in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. bring

me to heaven, for I am in Christ ; he is the way, the door.

But it may be asked, How will it be made out from Scripture, that this is the meaning of his being *our righteousness* ? I answer : both the Old Testament and the New are one in it ; as face answers to face in a glass, or in the water, as the cherubims looked towards each other, so the Bible agrees on this subject.

In the *Old Testament* it is prophesied of him, Dan. ix. 24. *that he should bring in everlasting righteousness.* What to do ? *To finish the transgression and to make reconciliation for iniquity.* Wouldst thou have an end made of thy sins ? It must be in this way ; it can be in no other. In Mal. iv. 2. He is called *the Sun of righteousness*, not only righteous in himself, pure and spotless, but the Lord *our* righteousness.

As full of righteousness for our purpose, in every thing, as the sun is of light ; no danger of wanting.

As free to communicate as the sun is ; whosoever will may come.

As refreshing and comfortable where he doth communicate it, as the sun is.

In the *New Testament* it is further cleared, so that he that runs may read.

Made unto us of God, righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. that is, God the Father pitying our lost and undone condition, for want of a righteousness, made him righteousness to us. Here is my Son, saith he, shall be your righteousness, I make him so to you ; ordain, constitute, and appoint him your atonement, propitiation, advocate, surety. Plead him accordingly.

Again, *He hath made him to be sin for us who*

knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 1 Cor. v. 21. Note. It is said, he was made sin for us ; that is, the sin of the world was imputed to him, made to meet upon him as the debts of a great many debtors are upon one common surety, Isa. liii. 6. Being found under such a debt he was treated accordingly, Isa. liii. 10. bruised—*made an offering*, that is, by dying upon the cross—the same with his being made *a curse* for us, Gal. iii. 13. (Lord ! that such things should be spoken of him, done unto him, for the sake of poor worms !) Now this suffering and dying of his is imputed to us, as our righteousness ; as when the surety pays a debt, his payment is imputed to the debtor, as if he himself had paid it. Not his being born, living, fulfilling the law, but his *death*. Not the sufferings of his life, but his dying sorrows.

Note also, Hereupon we are made the *righteousness* of God in him. We are accepted, justified, acquitted. But why the righteousness of God ?

(1.) Because this imputed righteousness is a righteousness of God's own contriving and providing for us, Phil. iii. 9. *which is of God, by faith* ; not the righteousness of works, which is of ourselves ; but of God by faith. We are sinners by imputation ; we may be righteous the same way.

(2.) Because Christ is God, who wrought it out and brought it in for us. It is not a man's righteousness, poor and weak, and insufficient, but a God's righteousness. He is *Jehovah* our righteousness.

II. I am to persuade you all, to call Jesus Christ by this sweet name, the Lord *our* right-

eousness; each one with application to himself—as David. And would you think an Old Testament saint, that lived under that dark dispensation, should have such clearness in this matter? A shame to us that are not clear in it, that live under gospel light, Ps. iv. 1. *O God of my righteousness*—the God on whom alone I do rely for righteousness. The prophet Isaiah speaks of it as the Shibboleth of all the saints, Isa. xlv. 24, 25. It was Paul's choice in particular, his deliberate choice, and should be ours, each of us, Phil. iii. 8, 9. O that I knew what to say, that would prevail. Some one perhaps objects, and says—"Call him by this name! It is the easiest thing of a thousand." You should distinguish doing it in word and tongue, and doing it in deed and truth—understandingly, uprightly, absolutely, so as to renounce all others, and to cleave to him alone.

Consider, I. The misery they are in who never yet called Jesus Christ by this name, and the blessed and happy condition they are in that have done so. Let me set the one of these over against the other, and if you will mix faith with it, I should hope it might move you.

(1.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness, that is, heartily owned him as such, our condition is a shameful, *naked* condition, and that is a wretched, miserable condition, Rev. iii. 17. because, till clothed with Christ's righteousness, our shame appears in the sight of God. Our shame is our sin. All thy sins are before him, and he loathes the sight of them. Perhaps thou sayest, What matter? O do not say so, for it is a matter, a sad matter.—When Adam saw his nakedness, he ran and hid him.

self; so wouldst thou, didst thou see thine. Well but, on the contrary, if thou hast heartily owned Christ, thy soul is a clothed soul; clothed with white raiment; clean and white, lovely and amiable; thou mayest go with comfort into the presence of God, as Jacob in Esau's clothes. Again,

(2.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness, ours is a dismal, dark condition. When we call the Lord our righteousness, then he rises upon our souls as a Sun of righteousness, and that which follows is the light of comfort, and peace, and joy; such joy as none knows but they that feel it. It is hidden manna, Ps. lxxxv. 10. Righteousness and peace meet together, in this sense, Rom. v. 1, 2. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand: and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 12. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall *glory*," Isa. xlv. 25.—But till then there is small cause for glorying; all thy own righteousness is but a spark of thy own kindling, notwithstanding which, thou liest down in sorrow. Is it possible for thee to think of past sins and a future judgment, and the joints of thy knees not tremble, as Belshazzar's did? But,

(3.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness we are in a perilous, perishing condition. Christ's righteousness is to us as Noah's ark. How happy were Noah and all his that were in it, they all escaped. How miserable all the rest, though many: some climbing higher than others, nay, some that helped to frame the ark, yet they perished.

Consider, 2. The difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of being pardoned and justified, accepted and saved, in any other way, and the facility and easiness of obtaining it in this way. Set these also the one against the other.

(1.) It is impossible we should be accepted of God without a righteousness, one or other, because he is a righteous God ; that is, he is of pure eyes, and, therefore, cannot endure to look upon iniquity, Ps. v. 4 ; xi. 7. He is also just and true to his word, his threatening word. Now by that the curse is entailed upon every transgression, death is the wages of every sin ; therefore, death and the curse must be undergone, or no pardon. The very natural conscience owns this. Whence else are all the qualms of fear and horror, which the wicked lie under ? Besides,

(2.) It is impossible that either our own righteousness, or the righteousness of any of our fellow-creatures, one or other, in heaven or earth, should bear us out and bring us off before God. I say it is impossible, absolutely impossible—

That our own should. For it is not to be called a righteousness. We have no such thing, Rom. iii. 9, 10. Righteousness is complete conformity to the righteous will and law of God. Where is that to be found ? Nowhere on earth, Isa. lxiv. 6. See Mic. vi. 6, &c.

It may be objected—Yea, but with the help of a little mercy it may do. I answer, show me that scripture where pardon, and peace, and salvation, are promised to a mixture of a little of our righteousness and a little of God's mercy. It is impossible—

That any other creature's should. I mean, saint or angel, or what they call the church's

treasure, made up of works of supererogation, done by men eminent for piety, in things good but not commanded, whereof the pope hath the key. (And who had the key lately, when for several months there was no pope.*) It is a mere fiction; Isa. lxiii. 16. Ps. xlix. 7. But,

On the other hand—How easy is it to obtain peace, and pardon, and salvation, by the merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, by calling him by this name. Easy, did I say? mistake me not. I do not mean easy in itself, or easy to the power of nature. No, it is harder to believe in Christ for righteousness than to keep all the commandments, because keeping the commandments hath something in the heart of man agreeing with it, but so hath not the way of justification by faith, it being purely by revelation.—I mean easy to grace, easy where God is pleased to give a willing mind, as knowledge is easy to him that understandeth, Prov. xiv. 6. Matt. xi. 28—30. 1 John v. 3.—Easy; that is, it is a ready way to justification and salvation, whereas seeking it by our own righteousness is a round-about way. We can never while we live know in any other way that one sin is pardoned, because perseverance to the end is required.

It may be asked—“If this be the only way, and such an easy, ready way, then what is the reason there are so few that walk in it; nay, what is the reason it is so scoffed and ridiculed as it is,—it is called putative righteousness?” I answer, the apostle, who was best studied in this point of any other teacher that ever was, speaking of the Jews,

* Pope Alexander VIII. died, Feb. 1, 1691. His successor, Cardinal Pignatelli, was not elected till July 2d Rapin, vol. xvii. pp. 209, 210.

who of all other people did most stumble at this stumbling-stone, gives two causes of their so doing: their ignorance and their pride, Rom. x. 3. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." The same are still the causes. *Ignorance of God's righteousness.* Their minds are not enlightened to see that this is the way that God hath appointed, and that it is a sweet way, and a safe way. *Lothness to let go their own righteousness.* They would fain merit heaven for themselves. They scorn to accept of it as a gift, or to sue for it as poor persons. Some who would be persuaded to leave their sins, would not be persuaded to quit their doing so from being their righteousness, but it will not be, Isa. xlv. 12. He that will put on the Lord Jesus Christ for justification, must put off himself, and all his own merit and righteousness, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ. And if He alone were not sufficient, it were another matter. Is he not Jehovah our righteousness? Hath not the Father said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased? O then be persuaded; and you that have called him by this name, call him so still. There are four special times and seasons when this should be done:

1. When we have done amiss, and are under guilt, and wrath threatens. And when is it not that it is so? Every day. If you are not concerned, so much the worse. If made sensible, we shall cry out, O for a righteousness! Behold, here is one, Jesus Christ the righteous, "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only,

but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 1, 2.

2. When we have well done, after some good work, and pride of heart rises, and we begin to expect from God as if we were something. No, Jesus Christ is the Lord my righteousness. I am an unprofitable servant when I have done all.

3. When we ask any thing of God: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xiv. 23.

4. When we come to look death and judgment in the face, which will be shortly: when sick and dying, O then for Christ, and his righteousness—it will be the cordial of cordials, 1 John i.

But observe this *caution*—Christ is not so our righteousness, as that we ourselves must not be righteous, and do righteously. We must be righteous, as if we were to be saved by it, and deny it, as having done nothing.



CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST IS OUR LIGHT.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should (or might) not abide in darkness. John xii. 46.

It is not here only, but elsewhere, in divers places of Scripture, that our Lord Jesus is held forth under the notion of a light.

1. It is said, God is light, 1 John i. 5. No creature hath the like resemblance to the divine nature, as light hath. He doth not only *dwell in light*, but he *is light*. Light is a pure, bright, clear, spiritual, unmixed substance. God is infinitely so. Now Jesus Christ, as God, is light. God of gods, light of lights, very God of very God.

2. But the text speaks of him as *coming into the world*, as God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh; and as such, it saith of him, nay, he saith it of himself, *I am come a light*; and why? to what end? *That whosoever believeth in me should (or might) not abide in darkness*.

Here are two DOCTRINES :

The one—That Jesus Christ is come a light into the world. The other—That now Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, those that believe in him do not abide in darkness. Or rather thus,

Jesus Christ is *come* a light into the world; that is, good news. It is one of his Old Testament names, *He that cometh*, Ps. cxviii. 26. compare Matt. xi. 3. It is a truth now, that he is come; he that was to come is come.

1. Jesus Christ is come a *light* into the world; a *foundation* and *food*; a *root* and *raiment*; our *head* and *hope*; *refuge* and *righteousness*; and not only so, but a *light*. This adds to the goodness of the news, and makes it better. What comfort could we take in any thing we have without light?

2. Now Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, those *that believe in him abide not in darkness*.

This is the best news of all, that the light doth not shine upon them in vain. They have eyes to see it, they have the comfort of it.

Show, I. What kind of light Jesus Christ is.

II. What inferences we are to draw, from his being come a light, such a light, into the world.

I. What kind of light is the Lord Jesus ?

There are several kinds of light. There is glow-worm light, and rotten-wood light ; fire light and candle light ; star light and moon light : all these are lights. But there is one light more, that is far beyond them all, and that is *sun* light ; between which, and the former, there is no comparison : and that light Jesus Christ is—sun light. None of the former is *the light of the world* ; only the sun is so. Now Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*, John viii. 13. Not only come *a* light into the world, but he is *the* light of the world.

It was prophesied of him, before he came, that he should arise a sun, Mal. iv. 2. Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

It is expressly told of him, that he did arise accordingly as such when he did come, “ The day-spring from on high hath visited us,” Luke i. 78.—the sun-rising. John the Baptist was the morning star that came before him. Now sun light hath these properties :

1. It is *glorious* light. The most glorious in itself. The glory of it is such as the eye cannot behold, or look upon, without winking, or twinkling, 1 Cor. xv. 41. The beauty of glorified bodies is set forth by it for want of a better illustration, Matt. xiii. 43. So is represented Christ, in his transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 2. And is not Jesus Christ of all others the most glorious. His name is Michael. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord*, Ps. xlv. 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, Cant. v. 10. He is *the standard-bearer*, Col. i. 18. His is *the pre-eminence*. If you ask, In what ? I answer, in every thing that is excel-

ent. In all manner of perfections, wisdom, power, holiness, he is far exalted above all that is named both in heaven and earth. Every knee must bow to him, and every creature yield. Candles are not seen, no, nor stars, nor the moon itself, when the sun shines ; their light disappears : so are all other things eclipsed by the Saviour. O then let this advance your esteem of him more and more. You may think too highly of others, but not of him ; either he will be uppermost, or nothing.

2. It is *general* light. It shines every where, Ps. xix. 6. One sun serves all the world, nay, we are told, that all places have equally the same measure and proportion of the sun's presence with them every year, though not after the same manner. All have as much day as night, and as much night as day, which is certainly a contrivance of Infinite Wisdom, and it is to be adored in it. There is but one Christ, but that one is a universal Saviour to all the world ; so that all that are saved are saved by him alone, and by no other, 1 John ii. 2. When he sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel, see their commission, how large ! " Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark xvi. 15. What the Psalmist says of the sun and its course, Paul applies to their preaching, Rom. x. 18. I cannot say, all the world hath alike the benefit of the gospel at this day ; would to God it had. But to be sure we have it, and have long had it, Matt. iv. 16. For which we have cause to be very thankful. " While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light," John xii. 36.

3. It is a fountain-light. What light the moon and the planets have, they derive it all from the sun.

They have none of their own further than he communicates. So Jesus Christ is the spring-head and fountain from whence every good and perfect gift comes. *Gifts of nature* do all flow from him. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 2. So some understand that of the *light of reason*, which all men have: it is a ray from this sun—all learning, knowledge in arts and sciences, trades and manufactures. So also *gifts of grace*: "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," John i. 16. He is the *author* as well as finisher of faith, Heb. xii. 2. And, therefore, in all our wants we must have recourse to him; and in all our receivings we must give him the praise.

4. It is a free light. It costs us nothing. What is more free than the light? so what is more free than free grace, John iv. 10. the gift of God, Rom. v. 15. the free gift? So Christ is called, and justification by him. In this strain the promises, and calls, and invitations run, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Isa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17. "Therefore ye are inexcusable, if ye go without.

5. It is enlightening light. The sun hath not its light for itself, but for the world, and it communicates it accordingly. It rises every morning, and dispels the darkness of the night, and

shines all the day ; and very sweet and useful it is. Our sun Christ is an enlightening sun, Luke ii. 32. He finds us not only in the dark, but blind, Rev. iii. 17. even darkness itself. But he doth not leave us so. He opens blind eyes. That is more than the sun in the firmament doth or can do. Bring your eyes, and he will bring light ; but eyes he gives not. But this sun gives eyes, Isa. xlii. 6, 7. He doth not only reveal the object, but repairs the faculty ; he is a *healing* sun, Mal. iv. 2. In Rev. iii. 18. we read of *eye-salve*, and in 1 John ii. 20. of the *unction*. O pray for this, as Paul doth for the Ephesians, Eph. i. 17, 18. Pray, as the blind man that came to Christ, for eye-sight.

6. It is increasing light. In the morning, when the sun first rises, there are mists, and fogs, and clouds, which darken the air. But, by degrees, as the sun gets up, they vanish, and are gone, and anon noon-day comes. So it is with the souls that Christ enlightens, Prov. iv. 18. See Isa. xxx. 26. Our knowledge in the things of God is never perfect and complete while we live in this world, 1 Cor. xiii. 14. hereafter it will be : allude to Mark viii. 22.

(1.) We should therefore be humble in ourselves, not only because what we have we have received, but because if we receive but little, it is little only in comparison with what we shall have. Pride of understanding is a root sin.

(2.) We should be patient towards others, not judging, and censuring, and despising them, because they see not what we do. We should rather encourage and comfort them. Their light also is growing, Phil. iii. 15.

II. What inferences are to be drawn from this subject ?

1. What a miserable condition then is a sinful Christless condition ! If Christ be the light, then those who are out of Christ are out of the light. If the Sun of righteousness be not risen upon thy soul, thou art benighted to this day. It may be risen amongst us, and yet not be risen upon us. It may shine in the places where we live, and yet not shine into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Who can choose but pity Egypt, where it was dark for three days ; much more the northern regions, where it is dark for six months : most of all, poor souls that have been in darkness all their days ; those who see nothing, know nothing, and, which is worst of all, care to know nothing, in the things of God and of their souls : nay, who hate the light, shut their eyes against it, and love darkness rather than light, John iii. 19, 20. How will such escape, that rebel against the light, Job xxiv. 13. saying, Depart, Job xxi. 14. ? No godly man doth so. Where the least glimmering of saving light hath shined into the soul, it begets a desire after more and more of it ; a love to the means, especially the word of God.

But wherein lies the misery of a blind and dark condition ?

(1.) I answer, it is very *uncomfortable*. Eccl. xi. 7. Light is sweet and pleasant, so is knowledge in the things of God. Ask those that have it, they will tell you that they would not be without it for a world, Prov. ii. 10. This pleasure thou hast none of. Sermons are like the white of an egg to thee, without savour, without relish.

(2.) It is very *unsafe*. Thou hast a journey

to go, that will not be gone without light. There are many by-ways ; it is easy to miss the right way : they find it so that are most enlightened, much more those that have no light. There are many gins, and snares, and pit-falls ; there is great danger of being caught ; John xii. 35. " He that walks in darkness knows not whither he goeth." He thinks he is going to heaven, and alas ! he is going to hell.

(3.) Thou hast work to do that will not be done without light, nay, not without sun-light. Some ordinary works may be done by candle-light, but not this. Thou hast a God to serve, a soul to save ; which is needful work, Luke x. 42. and nice work, not to be done by the light of nature or the power of nature.

(4.) It is miserable *here*. Such are under the devil's power at present, (who in this sense is the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12.) and in the highway to the regions of eternal darkness, to be a companion with him for ever. Darkness and prison go together, Isa. xlii. 7. Acts xxvi. 18.

(5.) It will be miserable *hereafter*. All this is said to affect you with the misery of such a condition, and yet all is nothing till you are brought to make the application to yourselves : Is not this my condition ?—Rather are you not ready to say, with the pharisees, John ix. 40, *Are we blind also ?* Sure I am, we were each of us born blind.—Are we convinced of that ?—Hath the light enlightened us so far ?—If it hath, the next query will be, when and how wast thou enlightened ; thine eyes opened, the change wrought ? If you do not know when or how, canst thou witness the thing itself, and say, as he, " One thing I know

that whereas I was blind, now I see," John ix. 25. It cannot be, but that one born blind and afterwards seeing, must be sensible of a great alteration ; though but little at first, yet more and more afterwards.

2. What an unspeakable mercy then was the giving of Christ to save us from all this misery ; to be a light to lighten the world ! We have cause to bless God every day for the light of the sun.—What a dungeon were the world without it ! The moon and all the stars, as many as they are, cannot do that which one sun doth. So saints and angels, and all the creatures put together, are nothing without Christ. Therefore thank God, above all, for the unspeakable gift ; especially if he be risen upon thy soul, if he have begun to make thee light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. This is certainly the mercy of mercies ; all is nothing without it. Though he have blessed thee with temporal blessings of all sorts,—health, strength, wife, children, a plentiful estate ; say, all this were nothing, if he had not called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light, Col. i. 12, 13.

3. Of what concernment is it to us to come to Christ, to be enlightened by him. Were you, any of you, (which blessed be God you are not,) destitute of bodily eye-sight, and I could tell you tidings of one that could infallibly cure you, how welcome should I be ! Behold ! I bring you tidings of one that can cure your spiritual blindness. But then you must come to him, believe in him, as here ; that *whosoever believeth*, that is, mixes faith with the report of the gospel, concerning him, his ability, and willingness to save ; in the sight and sense of this blindness and darkness, and the insufficiency of all other remedies, betakes himself

to him, craves help of him, casts himself upon him, trusts in him, doth as he directs him, shall not abide in darkness.—As he to whom “Jesus said, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing,” John ix. 7. The direction was, *Go, wash*;—so I address you. Now what harm is there in all this? Will it not be of unspeakable benefit and comfort to thy soul here, hereafter? Behold, he counsels thee; “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see,” Rev. iii. 18. Behold, he calls thee, Mark x. 49. O let the call this day be an effectual call. Delay no longer; away quickly to the throne of grace, and beg for this eye-salve;—to the means of grace, and seek it there.

4. What is to be done by those on whom this light is risen; I answer,—As Christ is the light of the world, so ye also are the light of the world. He himself hath honoured you with that name, “Ye are the light of the world,” Matt. v. 14. not the greater light that rules the day, he only is that; but—the lesser lights. Then,

(1.) *Let your light shine before men*, v. 16. hide not your candles under a bushel. Walk as children of the light, Eph. v. 8. Rom. xiii. 12, 13. 1 Thess. v. 5—8.

(2.) Let your light be *growing and increasing* more and more—especially concerning the evil of sin, the weakness of self, the excellency of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of this world, the reality of the other world.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST IS OUR LIFE.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
Col. iii. 4.

THERE are three lessons to be learned from these words :

1. That Christ is *our life*.
2. That Jesus Christ shall *appear*.
3. That when Christ shall appear all true believers shall *appear with him* in glory.

Our attention will be confined to one—Christ is our life. You see it is plainly and expressly laid down here; he that runs may read the truth of it. And is he *our life*? then how dear and precious should he be to us! Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life, yet how many are there that will give nothing for Christ, no not a lust for him; a bad sign, he is not yet their life, for if he were, they would not part with him for a world, for a thousand worlds.

Show, I. In what sense Jesus Christ is our life.

II. What inferences may be drawn from it.

I. In what sense is Jesus Christ our life?

Life is three-fold; there is natural life, spiritual life, and eternal life.

1. Natural life, which is the life of the body flowing from its union with the soul: while soul and body are together, we live; when they part, we die. Now who brought them together, who

keeps them together? Jesus Christ: then he is our natural life, Deut. xxx. 20.

He is so as God blessed for ever; it is in him that we live, and move, and have our being: he breathed into us the breath of life at first, Gen. ii. 7. he holds our soul in life, Ps. lxvi. 9. In this sense he is our life, John i. 3, 4.

He is so also as God-man, the Mediator; we owe it to his intercession, that we are here alive this day: did not he interpose, we were gone. He is the dresser, Luke xiii. 7—9. *Cut them down*, saith justice; *Let them alone*, saith Jesus; and thence it is that we are let alone.

If a man be under a sentence of death, the friend that procures for him a reprieve, may well be said to be his life. Now that is our case,—and what pity is it, that so few consider it, that so few lay it to heart:—we live upon him, we cannot live without him, and yet we do not live to him.

2. Spiritual life, which is the life of the soul flowing from its union with God. When God and the soul come together, the soul lives; when they part, it dies; thy soul is but the carcass of a soul, if it have not union with God. Now there is no union with God but by Jesus Christ; it is he alone that brings God and souls together. He is the Mediator, the Peace-maker. First, the two natures, God's nature and man's nature, were united in him, as God-man; then he took up the quarrel between their persons, and made peace. God and man could never have come together but for Christ; he is the bond of the union; then he, and he only, is *the life*, John xiv. 6; *no coming to the Father*, that is, no union with the Father, *but by him*.

By our natural life we live to one another, to mutual comfort and converse ; by our spiritual life we live to God, and have converse with him. and he with us ; which cannot be, unless we be alive to him, for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Now how are we made *alive to God*? Only *through Jesus Christ*, Rom. vi. 11.

It is he that begins spiritual life in us, Eph. ii. 1. Our natural condition is a dead condition, not only a dark condition, a blind condition, till he enlighten us, but a dead condition, till he quicken us. Many a man is blind that is not dead ; born blind, yet not born dead ; but we are born both blind and dead. We are before him, as those dead and dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. till he breathes upon us, by his word and Spirit ; then we live, and not till then, Gal. iv. 19. He is said to be formed in us, that is, to become the soul of our souls ; his Spirit dwelling in us, (which if *we have not*, Rom. viii. 9. *we are none of his*,) is the same thing to our souls, that our souls are to our bodies—the means, and way, and principle of their living. As his human nature was formed in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost over-shadowing her ; so his divine nature is formed in every believing soul, 2 Pet. i. 4. by the same Holy Ghost over-shadowing them.

It is he that carries it on and continues it. When he hath breathed the life of grace into us, if he should then leave us to live of ourselves, alas ! we should die again presently, and therefore, he looks to it, when he hath bestowed it, to maintain and cherish it, Heb. xii. 2. Ps. lxvi. 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life*. This is true of life spiritual. We say, Preservation is a continued creation, John v. 17. It is so with reference

to grace; in him we live spiritually, and move spiritually, and have our being spiritually; live, and move, and have our being, towards God. His flesh and blood is the food of our souls; except we eat of that, and drink of that, by believing, our souls can no more subsist, than our bodies can without meat and drink.

He is the keeper of our spiritual life, 1 Pet. i. 5. Adam had the keeping of his own, and lost it, the devil cheated him of it; and so should we: therefore He himself undertakes it, and it is well for us he hath. We are no good keepers of spiritual life, we cannot ourselves keep life and soul together; it is he that doth it every day.

3. Eternal life, which is the life of heaven: this and spiritual life are for substance the same; they differ in degree only. Life spiritual, the life of grace, is life eternal, the life of glory, begun; and life eternal, the life of glory, is life spiritual, the life of grace, perfected.

They differ as the child's life and the man's life, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

As the morning-sun from the noon-sun, Prov. iv. 18.

As the spring from the summer; the budding rose from the blown rose.

Now of this life Jesus Christ is,

1. The procurer and purchaser; he bought it for us, Heb. v. 9. It was the will of the Father that he should come and bestow it on the remnant, John vi. 40, 47: x. 10. He *hath* it, *hath it* already, that is, the earnest of it, in his heart, the first-fruits of that great harvest; or, he is as sure of it, as if he had it in his hand.

2. He is the life itself. Wherein consists the happiness of heaven?

In being *with* Jesus. This was it he promised the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. this was it that Paul desired, Phil. i. To be *with* him so, as to see him and enjoy him. It is sweet now to see him through the lattices, through a glass darkly, in his holy ordinances; what will it be then to see him face to face, to see him not afar off, but near? Num. xxiv. 17. not as another's, but as our own. Dives saw Abraham, and Lazarus in his bosom,—but what the better?

In being *like* him. There is now a kind of rude draught of his image drawn upon the soul, but hereafter that draught shall be perfected; we shall be completely like him: this follows upon the former—likeness upon vision.

Now, in the rude draught, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Hereafter, in the perfections, 1 John iii. 1, 2. Like him in body, Phil. iii. 21. We shall *appear* with him—as here. Now, to speak properly, this is the life, and of this that saying of his is commonly interpreted, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” John xiv. 6. As if he had said, I am my people's everlasting happiness, as God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 1. thy *reward* hereafter, thy *shield* here. The life hereafter in the other world, and the true way to it in this world; and what would we have more?

II. What may we infer from hence?

1. If Christ be our life, then without Christ, without life;—Christless souls are lifeless souls, 1 John v. 12. I beseech you attend to what I say, it is about matters of life and death, and those are matters of great concernment, especially life and death spiritual, life and death eternal.

If ye have not Christ ye are dead men and women, for he is the life.

You are dead in law, under a sentence of death ; it is only to those that are in Christ Jesus that there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1.—to others then there is.

You are dead in state, void of spiritual life : *This my son was dead*, dead to his father ; his father was all one as if he had no such son : so is thy ease as to any duty or service. Now when did he begin to be otherwise ? When became he alive ?—When he *arose and came*. Hast thou done so ? If not, thou art dead, dead to this day. If thou *hast* Christ, thou didst receive him. But when ? how ? at what ordinance ? by whose offer ? Perhaps thou art not able to tell, when first ; but I ask, when at all ? Saints are often receiving him, but if never, how *have* him ? We know when we received, that is, closed with, such a one as husband, wife, master, landlord, friend ; and why not know when we received Christ as Prince and Saviour : for certain, they that received Christ have received the spirit of Christ, Gal. iv. 6. *contra* Rom. viii. 9. Now the Spirit is a Spirit of grace and supplication, sets the heart against sin, inclines to what is good ; it is a law written in the heart. O try ! Will ye believe a man is dead that hath neither breath, nor sense, nor motion ? we reckon so, as to the body, and in like manner it is, as to the soul.

If there are no inward breathings towards God, no desires after him, no hearty praying, otherwise than in a cold, dead form rested in, the soul is dead. Crying is a sign of life.

If there are no spiritual senses exercised, seeing hearing, tasting, feeling ; no sense of burthen in sin, no taste of sweetness in the word of God, no

sight of invisible things, no ear to hear the voice either of word or rod ; the soul is dead.

And so for motion ; they that have received Christ Jesus the Lord, they walk in him : to them *to live* is Christ, as Phil. i. 21. They do all they do, that is good, in his name and strength, aiming to please him. Now, will ye bring your condition to this touch-stone ? What say ye ? are you dead or alive ? You are alive with bodily life, God be praised, but are you possessed of soul life ? What life is there in the inward man ?

2. Then the way to live is to make Christ ours ; the only way, there is no other. You would all live, would you not ? I live in the world,—what else ? I mean, live to God now, and live with him hereafter. O then come to Christ, and close with him ; he complains, we will not, John v. 40. And why will we not ? Because we are not convinced, we do not understand, we do not believe ; in a word, we will not, because we will not. Two things should move us ;

The one is, The unspeakable misery of dead souls. See Eph. ii. 1, 2, 12. This now, and as for hereafter, they must be eternally dying.

The other is, The unspeakable happiness of living souls ; *they shall appear with him*, who is their life : all must appear, but they in glory.

You tell us we are dead, and yet you tell us we must come to Christ. Can dead men come ?

I reply, Thou hast as much power as ever any had that lived before thee. What power had Lazarus when he came out of the grave at Christ's call ? The power went along with the call—Lazarus, come forth—and Lazarus came forth. Again,

Thou canst pray to God to give thee the power,

and when he hath given it, thou canst use and employ it ; and who requires more ? Eph. v. 14. Is it objected, But I am an old sinner, and have been long dead ; is there hope for me ? I answer, Lazarus had been long dead, yea, and buried, yet at Christ's word he lived. We read of two others raised by him—the ruler's daughter, newly dead ; the widow's son, upon the bier ;—signifying the several sorts of sinners spiritually dead,—some young ; some middle-aged ; some old. There is hope for each. Yet presume not, neither say, I will to-morrow, for to-morrow is none of ours : the uncertainty of the continuance of life natural, should make us hasten to secure life spiritual and life eternal.

3. Then you that are alive, remember how you came to be so. You were not the authors of your own life, you had it from Christ, therefore let him have the glory of it ; call him by this name every day, Lord Jesus, thou art my life. We can destroy ourselves, but we cannot help ourselves, Hos. xiii. 9. Eph. ii. 8. This should humble us, and lay us low.

4. Then to him we must go for all our daily supplies, for the support and maintenance of our life ; the same that began the good work must perform and finish it. How oft doth David, Ps. cxix. pray, *Quicken* me, O Lord, O Lord, *quicken* me. He was alive certainly, but being sensible of dulness, deadness, decays, he flies to God : so must we ; we must excite, quicken, ourselves, and exhort, quicken, one another ; yet after all, 't is grace that quickens.

5. We should bless God, both for the life we have, and the life we hope for. See Isa. xxxviii. 19. Ps. lvi. 12, 13. Had it been from death

poral only, we had cause for praise, but much more for freedom from spiritual death. Encourage faith by it; he that hath done the greater will do the lesser, *v.* 13. Encourage patience by it under outward troubles, *Ps.* cxviii. 18.—not to damnation: see *Lam.* iii. 49.—a *living* man.

6. Then rest not in having life, but press after liveliness, *Rev.* iii. 1, 2. A lively frame in our walking is an excellent frame, it rids work, brings something to pass in religion. See how lively and active wicked men are.



CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST IS OUR PEACE.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. *Eph.* ii. 14.

THUS *he* here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *we that were sometimes afar off, are made nigh, v.* 13. That which is said of him is, that he is *our peace*.

Doct. The Lord Jesus Christ is our peace.

I shall show in what sense, and how, we are to understand it, and what improvement we are to make of it.

Peace is three-fold: There is peace with God—peace within ourselves—and peace with one another.

And all these Jesus Christ is: our *peace* not

only a friend to it, but the thing itself; as our *righteousness*, our life, so our peace. He hath not only brought in a righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, but he himself is it. So he hath not only made peace, and proclaimed peace, but he *is* our peace. He not only gives us life, but *is* our life.

I. He is our peace with God.

When God made man at first there was perfect love and amity between them—God at peace with man; man at peace with God. They had sweet fellowship and converse one with another, walking together in the garden. But when Adam sinned, then, immediately, the quarrel began. Eating the forbidden fruit broke the peace, and ever since there hath been a quarrel.

A mutual quarrel. God an enemy to man; man an enemy to God, Zech. xi. 8.

A universal quarrel. It is true of all the children of Adam, without exception, one as well as another, Eph. ii. 3.—*children of wrath*.

Passively, God is wroth with us.

Actively, we are wroth with God. As all men are enemies, so all man is enmity, Rom. viii. 7. The understanding, the will, the mind, Col. i. 21. Besides,

This is a growing quarrel; it increases more and more by actual sin, Hos. iv. 1.—Omission—commission.

And on God's part it is a righteous quarrel: he hath reason to be angry, and to be offended with us.

This appears if we look upon sin as a debt; and such it is. We are taught to pray, Forgive us our *debts*. Sinner, let me tell thee, thou art indebted to the God of heaven. (And he to thee; he owes

thee a payment, Deut. vii. 10.) It may be thou art beforehand in the world, but thou art behind-hand with God. Thou owest him for all the talents thou hast received, and not improved, Matt. xxv. 14, &c. "I will recover my wool and my flax," Hos. ii. 9. I will *recover*; it is a law term: it is *my* wool, mine still, as to the propriety, though given to you for your use.

It appears also if we regard it as a trespass: *Forgive us our trespasses*. The divine law is given us, as a hedge, to keep us in compass. When we sin we leap the hedge; as in profaning the Sabbath we rob God, encroach upon his time.

It appears further if we look upon sin as treason, high treason, against the crown and dignity of the God of heaven: an affront to his majesty. It defies, despises, denies him.—"And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," Exod. v. 2. This is the language of every wilful sin. But,

It is the quarrel of a covenant, Lev. xxvi. 25.

Now, on man's part it is an unrighteous, unreasonable quarrel. He hath done nothing to deserve our enmity, Jer. ii. 4, 5. John x. 32. And

If it be not taken up, it is like to be an everlasting quarrel, like that with Amalek, Exod. xvii. 16. Other feuds death puts an end to, but here it is not so. Death brings the sinner into an endless state of misery and torment, where he is hating, and cursing, and blaspheming God, and God hating, and plaguing, and punishing him to all eternity. O that this were seriously thought of by us! that we would lay it to heart, making application each of us to ourselves—I am the man; God hath a quarrel with *me*; I am indebted.

ed ; *I* have trespassed. Think thou hearest him saying to thee, as to Ephesus, Rev. ii. 4. “ I have somewhat *against thee*.”

It is in reference to this quarrel that the Lord Jesus Christ is *our peace*. He interposes to take it up, and he hath taken it up upon terms agreed on. He is the Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He is the Daysman, Job ix. 33. As he that steps between to make peace between two that are at variance, must deal with both parties, first with one, then with the other, so did he.

1. He deals with God—to atone and pacify him. I must have satisfaction, saith divine justice, for the debt that these creatures owe me, for the wrong that they have done me, so many oaths, lies, curses, so many Sabbaths profaned, prayer neglected. Lord, what will satisfy ? Blood ? Heb. ix. 22. Death ? Gen. ii. 17. Rom. vi. 23. Will any blood, any death, do it ? Will the blood of bulls and goats make amends ? Will the death of rams and lambs satisfy ? Nay, will the death of my first-born ? Mic. vi. 6, 7. No, it must be the blood of *God*, that the merit of it may be of infinite value ;—and that God must be man too, that the nature that sinned may satisfy ; the same nature. Now, where is that God-man that will undertake it ? Lo, I come, says the blessed Jesus, rather than this quarrel shall continue, and divine justice be unatoned, and poor sinners everlastingly perish, Ps. xl. 6. I will be made a man, a man of sorrows, a poor man : I will suffer and die, die upon a tree. Why, that will do, says God, let me have that, and I will be a friend : and he had it, in the fulness of time ; he had it, and declared himself satisfied, Matt. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5. Do we understand this, believe it, apply it ?

“ All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

2. Having done with God, he deals with man ; every man, one by one ; not himself immediately, in his own person, but by proxy. He sends his Spirit to treat with us ; and may I not safely say, he hath been one time or other treating with each of you, seeking to persuade you ? What to do ? Why, to be friends with God, to lay down your enmity against him, and to be willing to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20. Ministers are the Spirit’s agents in this matter, and they come and beseech you, and when they beseech you, God in them beseeches you. Now some are prevailed with, blessed be God : “ You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,” Col. i. 21. There is a certain *now* of reconciliation one time or other in our lives, sooner or later ; and there are they that can say, he is our peace, he hath made both one, brought God and us together, *broken down the partition wall*.

Some may ask—What is that partition wall ?

On God’s side the guilt of sin is it ; till that be satisfied for, he cannot be friends. This is broken down by Christ dying.

On our part the corrupt nature is it, the carnal, stubborn will. Till that be subdued, the heart of stone turned into a heart of flesh, we will never be friends, we cannot. Now that is broken down by renewing grace. The Spirit of God in the

work of regeneration and sanctification makes the change, turns the world upside down in the man, opens his blind eyes, softens his hard heart ; of a stranger, brings him acquainted ; of an enemy, makes him a friend. Now this work of making peace, bringing God and man together, is,

Necessary work. Work that must be done, or we are undone ; it is the one thing needful, and there is reason it should be done quickly, because of the uncertainty of time, and the greater uncertainty of opportunity, Luke xix. 41.

It is work that no one else can do, but he only that is our peace. The papists grant there is but one mediator of reconciliation, though there be many of intercession ; but we know but one, both of intercession and reconciliation, and Jesus is he.

It is work that he hath done for some, I hope some of *you*. Are ye not friends, reconciled ?

It is work that he would do for all. It is not because of him that any perish ; he calls, invites, entreats, persuades, Rev. iii. 20. Matt. xxiii. 37. Isa. xlv. 22. O suffer yourselves to be prevailed with by him. Say, Lord, I yield, I will stand it out no longer. Many arguments may be used to move us to be friends with God, and to make Jesus Christ our peace. In order thereunto,

Consider, 1. That there is no standing out against him, no fighting it out with him ; he will certainly be too hard for us.

His arm is a long arm ; therefore he can reach us wherever we are. There is no hiding ourselves from him. Besides his sword, he hath a bow and arrows, Ps. vii. 12, 13.

His arm is a strong arm ; mighty, almighty, as to save, so to destroy ;—therefore the blow, when

it falls, wherever it lights, will be accordingly, 1 Cor. x. 22. Heb. x. 31. O that this were considered, "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together," Isa. xxvii. 4. By briers and thorns is meant,—the sinner himself, who is no more able to abide his wrath, than briers and thorns a fire; and—all those uninstituted ways and means which men have invented to themselves, towards making peace. All our own righteousness, penances, pilgrimages; they are all utterly insufficient for this purpose.

Consider, 2. He is willing, freely willing, to become friends, Isa. xxvii. 4. Fury is not in me, and v. 5. *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.*

By *strength* is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the arm of God, the power of God; so called, not only because by him he made the world—as *the Word*—but because had it not been for his mediation he had been weak, as it were, could not, consistently with his honour and justice, have forgiven sin; but now it is otherwise.

By *laying hold* is meant believing. Faith in Christ is the soul's laying hold upon Christ, as Joab on the horns of the altar, as a sinking man on a cord cast out;—as when a blow is threatened on the arm, that holds the weapon, which prevents striking, so this laying hold prevents the stroke of justice. Now, shall we thus lay hold on the blessed Jesus, plead his undertaking? Say, Lord, be friends with me, for Christ hath died, and made peace.

Consider, 3. That until this be done, we are certainly miserable, for God is our enemy; either friend or foe, that is certain. If God be our ene-

my, all that is in God is our enemy ; all the creatures are our enemies, waiting only for orders.

Consider, 4. If this be done, we are made for ever. This is Eliphaz's argument to Job, *ch.* xxii. 21. *Good shall come unto thee*; all good—temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Now there are certain *marks* by which to know whether Christ be our peace towards God.

1. Have we thus laid hold on him by believing, accepted of him, yielded ourselves to him with unfeigned consent and assent, renouncing all other ? If so, thy peace is made, the partition wall is broken down, thou mayest go with boldness to the throne of grace, and sue out thy pardon, and take the comfort of it, Rom. v. 1, 2.

2. What is sin to us ? If Christ be *our peace*, sin is our trouble, lies heavy as a burthen ; it is felt and bewailed every day.

If God be made our friend, through Christ *our peace*, sin is looked upon as an enemy, and hated, and pursued, and watched against accordingly. Time was when it had the entertainment of a friend, an inmate ; the doors were open to it, it was heartily welcome ; provision was made for it. Is it otherwise now ? 2 Kings ix. 22.

3. If Christ be our peace, he hath not only reconciled God to us, but us also to God, and to all that is his ; his name, his glory, his word, his day, his people ;—for their relation sake to him—because they bear his image.

4. If Christ be our peace, and have made peace, there is always care to keep the peace. If any new matter of controversy arise, as soon as the heart smites, which it will do quickly, and we are made sensible of it, there will be no rest in the spirit, till the divine favour be recovered again.

Guilt in the soul is like a mote in the eye, not at ease till wept out. It uses to be so among friends.—Now, try by these marks. Many think all is well when it is not so; others doubt when there is no cause; therefore, examine.

II. Christ is our peace with one another.

It were a desirable thing that all who fear God, in the land, in the neighbourhood, were at peace among themselves; for as for peace with wicked men, it will never be while the world stands; the seed of the serpent, of the bond-woman, will hate, will persecute the seed of the woman—the free woman; fire and water will as soon be reconciled as these two seeds. But how happy were it if all good people were at peace, if all their enmities were at an end! The Saviour left this blessing as a legacy, John xiv. pressed it, John xv. prayed for it, John xvii.

The only means of it is Jesus Christ. The scope of the text leads to understand it of the union made between Jew and Gentile, at mortal feuds before, but reconciled in Christ.—And how?

1. By his becoming a common Saviour to both. It was his object to “reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby,” Eph. ii. 16.

2. By breaking down the wall of partition; that was, the ceremonial law, which he put an end to at his death, Eph. ii. 15.

3. By begetting in their hearts, by his Holy Spirit, a dear and entire love one towards another. As in his ministry he preached it, and pressed it, so by his grace he works it. This was a great matter when first accomplished. Now he that hath reconciled this enmity, and made peace, can certainly reconcile any other, for none was ever

greater than it : those amongst ourselves are nothing to it. Let us apply ourselves to him then, and pray “for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee.”

Pray—that the wall of partition may be broken down—within, without ; unwarrantable, unscriptural impositions without ; and uncharitable, unchristian dispositions within.

Pray—that by his Spirit and grace he would knit and join us together in brotherly love, which is the bond of perfectness. Something hath been done, and is in the doing, towards it ; all other names laid aside—this one taken up—the united brethren. Formerly a book called the Protestant Reconciler was publicly burned ; now the king* declares himself such.

III. Christ is our peace within ourselves, in our own bosom.

We commonly call this peace of conscience. It is an inward, sedate, composed, cheerful frame of spirit, at all times, and in all conditions. Now, the blessed Jesus is this also ; if the first, the third, for it is the result and product of it. When all is clear between us and heaven, how can it be but there must be joy in the Holy Ghost, or if not that, yet, however, peace, quietness ? The noise of trouble is without, Micah v. 5. “This man shall be the peace.”—His being man laid the foundation, Heb. *this* man, viz. the illustrious person described in v. 4. He not only gives peace, as a legacy, but is the peace.—Therefore, if we want peace, we must go to him. If we have it, let us give him the praise. It is called rest, and to him we must come for it, Matt. xi. 28, 29.

* William III.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER.

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

THERE are two things in these words :

The one a doctrinal position or assertion, containing in it the marrow or sweetness of the whole gospel : *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*

The other a practical inference drawn from it, by way of use and application : *Let us therefore keep the feast, &c.*

The former branches itself into three propositions :

1. Christ is our *passover*.
2. Christ our passover is *sacrificed*.
3. Christ our passover is sacrificed *for us*.

So also doth the latter :

1. Therefore we must *keep the feast*.
2. Therefore *not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice*.
3. Therefore *with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*. Here were work for many Sabbaths. I shall be brief on each.

Under the first head, the DOCTRINE is,

- I. Christ is our passover.

The passover was a yearly feast among the Jews, appointed of God in remembrance of the destroying angel passing over the houses of the Israelites when the first-born were slain in the houses of the Egyptians. Now Christ is not the feast, but forasmuch as there was a command about a lamb, called the paschal lamb, concerning which there were sundry rites and ceremonies enjoined to be observed, Jesus Christ is that lamb, that paschal lamb, called by a figure here, *the passover*. That lamb was a type of Christ. He is our paschal lamb, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God*, as John the Baptist said, pointing at him with his finger.

Now, a lamb was the fittest creature that could be to be a type of Christ, both in respect of harmlessness, and also of usefulness. None more patient, none more profitable, than a lamb. So Christ, Isa. liii. 7.

But it may be asked, what kind of lamb is referred to ?

I answer, it was a male lamb, to note his vigour and strength. And it was a lamb without blemish, signifying his absolute purity and perfection, 1 Pet. i. 19. In Christ there was no defect or distortion, no spot or deformity. So also it was a lamb of a year old ; in the Hebrew it is the son of a year ; a lamb in its prime, as we say. Now our Lord Jesus died in the prime of his age, between thirty and forty.

What, it may be inquired, was to be done to the lamb ?

It was to be separated from the rest of the flock, and kept apart four days before. So Christ was chosen out of the people, and set apart from all eternity in the decree and counsel of God, to be a

prince and a Saviour. It was also to be killed. So was Christ, he must die not a natural, but a violent, death, not in his bed but upon a tree, by the hand of violence ; and that death of his is our life. Besides, the time of killing it was in the evening. So Christ suffered in the evening of the day, about three o'clock, at the time of the evening sacrifice. And he suffered in the evening of the world, 1 Pet. i. 20. Towards the latter end of the fourth day, that is, the four thousandth year from the creation.

But the main matter was, what they were to do with the blood, and with the flesh. As for the bones, they were commanded not to break one of them ; which was accordingly fulfilled literally in our passover, John xix. 33—36. signifying, that notwithstanding his dying, he remained still able to save, even to the utmost.

As for the blood : they were to put it into a basin, with a bunch of hyssop to sprinkle it upon the door-posts of each house ; and when the destroying angel came to destroy, where the blood was, it was a warning to him that there was no first-born to be meddled with in that house, and so he passed them over.

Now our passover is Christ. And,

1. The death he died was a bloody death ; and it was well it was, for without blood there could be no redemption, no remission.

2. This blood of his we are to sprinkle by faith upon the door-posts of our souls, that is, we are to make a believing application of it to ourselves : who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*. We are commanded to do this ; it is our duty to do it ; we sin if we do not do it. We must believe that he is both able and willing to save, to save *us*,

thee and me, and thereupon to close with him as our Saviour.

3. Wherever this is done the destroying angel, that is, the justice of God, the curse of the law, the divine threatenings, the divine executioners, the avengers of blood, have nothing to do ; the blood atones and pacifies. Here dwells a believer, one that hath an interest in Christ, not in common only, but in special ; away, away, meddle not here.

Now is this done, brethren ? is Christ your passover ? is his blood sprinkled on your souls ?

If not, sprinkle it quickly ; you know not how near the destroyer may be. Death may be, perhaps, at the next house.

If it be done, in God's name take the comfort of it, Rom. viii. 1 ; v. 9. Also, make it appear it is so, by your loving him, and living to him. The blood was to be upon the door-posts, visible to all that passed by, Rom. x. 10. But,

As for the flesh : they were to roast it, and when they had done, to eat it with bitter herbs, with their loins girt, and their staves in their hand.

Now all this had a spiritual meaning in it : our passover is Christ.

1. The roasting signified his inexpressible sufferings which he did undergo at his death. Was ever sorrow like his sorrow ?

2. Our eating of it is by believing. Faith feeds upon Christ dying. As the mouth eats meat when it chews it, as the stomach receives and digests it, whereby the body is nourished and strengthened ; so the believing soul feeds upon Christ. See John vi.

Once eating in a man's life doth not do. We eat often ; so we must be often feeding by faith

upon Jesus Christ : yesterday's meat will not do to-day's work.

3. They were to eat it with bitter herbs. Those bitter herbs to us are godly sorrow for sin : they that truly believe are penitent, they also mourn for sin, Zech. xii. 10. If you believe, and have never mourned for sin, suspect that faith. It is said the herbs were made into a thick sauce, to mind them of the clay that they made bricks with.

4. They were to eat with their loins girt, and their staves in their hands ; which is the posture—of servants, girt for their work, Luke xii. 35, 36. We should be ready to every divine call, Ps. xxvii.

8. And—of travellers fitted out for a journey. They were out of Egypt, bound for Canaan, but a wilderness was in their way ; so we are travellers to the heavenly Jerusalem. “ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

II. Christ our passover was *sacrificed*.

The Jews, by God's appointment, had several sorts of sacrifices or offerings. Some were bloody, as their burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings. Others were unbloody, as their meat-offerings, drink-offerings, of flour, wine, oil, &c.

Now Christ our passover was a bloody sacrifice ; his life went for it ; he made his body an offering, he made his soul an offering, and the design thereof was to make peace.

III. Christ was sacrificed *for us*.

Not only for our good, to set before us an example, but in our stead. By right we should have

been sacrificed. No, saith he, let me be the sacrifice, and let these go their way. We are the Isaac, he the ram. O what love was there in this ! how should it for ever engage our hearts to him.

Under the second head the doctrine is,

I. *Therefore let us keep the feast.*

What feast ? Not the feast of Easter ; we know no such scriptural institution ; each Sabbath day is our Easter day ; a day sanctified, and set apart for the remembrance of our redemption finished by Christ on his resurrection day, the first day of the week.

‘But there is mention made of Easter in Acts xii. 4.’ I consider that the Jewish passover is meant ; for it is not likely Herod should owe such respect to a Christian festival.

‘But the keeping of Easter is ancient in the church.’ I answer, it was so, but the Scriptures are more ancient.

Not the feast of the Lord’s supper ; though, it is true, that is a feast, and a feast upon a sacrifice, and a feast that we ought all to keep, and to keep as here appointed ; we are guilty of a sin of omission if we do not. But,

By the feast here, I understand, rather, the whole course of our conversation in this world ; it is but one word—let us *feast* it then ; that is, let us feed heartily and plentifully upon this blessed Lamb, not poorly and sparingly. We ought every day to feast our souls upon Jesus Christ ; upon his merit and righteousness, upon his flesh and blood spiritually, upon his word, his promises, the manna, the hidden manna. I say, every day, by fresh acts of faith, Cant. v. 1, 2. Not on Sabbath days only, or sacrament days only, but

every day—it is our own fault if we do not, Luke xvi. 19. And, which follows upon the former, let us *feast* it, that is, rejoice in the Lord always, Eccl. x. 10.

Mirth is two-fold. There is *vain, carnal mirth*, expressing itself in vain, frothy discourse, joking and jesting, which are not convenient, in youthful frolics, drinking, and dancing; enough of this, and too much, every where.

There is, also, *sober, serious, holy mirth*; spiritual joy, called joy in God, terminating in him as the immediate object of it; and this the word calls for again and again, Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4. It stands in opposition to a lumpish, heavy, drooping, melancholy spirit and behaviour, which prevails oftentimes even over the best, but they should chide themselves for it, as David, Ps. xlii. and xliii. Consider,

1. A sorrowful frame of heart is a grief to the Spirit of God, whose office it is to comfort us.

2. It brings an ill report upon the ways of God, discourages standers by, lays a stumbling block—as the evil spies.

3. It is weakening to ourselves. If the joy of the Lord is our strength, Neh. viii. 10. as oil to the wheels, then a contrary frame of spirit causes us to drive heavily in duty. Remember but this one word, and believingly apply it, *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*, and see if it will not thence follow—therefore *let us feast it*. O how glad were the poor Israelites to be gotten out of Egypt! At passover time they made all outward shows imaginable of great joy and rejoicing.

II. Therefore *not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness*. Allusion is here made to another of the appointments

at the Jewish passover, which was, that they should eat no bread with leaven in it during all the seven days that the passover lasted ; and very strict they were in it, searching with candles, cursing themselves if they knew of any crumb kept, or hidden any where.

Now this the apostle applies here to naughty persons ; he writes to have the incestuous church-member cast out by the censure of excommunication. Why so ? Because he is like leaven, and leaven will spread, 1 Cor. v. 6. Guilt is infectious, therefore put him from among you. It ought still to be so amongst those that own Christ for their passover, 2 Thess. iii. 6.

He applies it also to naughty things, *malice* and *wickedness*. Those that call Christ their passover must not be *malicious*, must not be *wicked*. Malice is inveterate anger, and wrath, and hatred towards any person. Away with it, it is leaven, it sours the spirit of him in whom it is ; sours his duties, God cares not for them. No leaven was to be mixed with any sacrifice, Lev. ii. 11. Malice sours the converse, exposes to manifold temptations, Eph. iv. 26, 27. It makes a man in God's account a murderer, 1 John iii. 15. Therefore, I beseech you all, as ever you expect benefit by Christ's sacrifice for you, purge out this leaven, Eph. iv. 31, 32 ; v. 1.

So likewise for *wickedness*. This is a general word, including all manner of allowed wilful sin, away with it, 2 Tim. ii. 19. There is good reason why you should. Is Christ the minister of sin ? Did he die to obtain leave and liberty for us to live in sin ? God forbid ! We cannot think so, but rather the contrary, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

III. *But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* There is another thing compared in Scripture to leaven, which all they that keep the gospel passover must put away, and that is, hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1. Away with it, it will spoil all.

We must not be hypocrites, nor do any thing we do in hypocrisy ; even disciples must beware of this. It is the cry of the world against us that we are such, but let us approve ourselves to God that we are not such, and then no matter.

We must not have a form of godliness without the power.

Nor a name to live without being alive indeed.

We must not do what we do to be seen of men.

We must not draw near to God with our mouths, when our hearts are far from him.

We must not make clean the outside and be careless what is within.

We must not look one way and row another, as Jehu did.

Suspect this evil ; search for it ; watch and pray against it. Contrary to all this is sincerity and truth ; they differ like shadow and substance, like the picture of a man and a man.

It was the saying of one,—I know no religion but sincerity, John i. 14. It is the condition of the new covenant, Gen. xvii. 1. It will be our comfort and joy, 2 Cor. i. 12. Our strength and preservation, “The integrity of the upright shall guide them,” Prov. xi. 3. “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee,” Ps. xxv. 21.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST IS OUR PORTION.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Lam. iii. 24.

THERE are several sayings in Scripture, both which men have said to their souls, and which their souls have said to them.

1. Which men have said to their souls.

Bad men—*Soul, take thine ease*, Luke xii. That was a naughty saying.

Good men—chiding sayings—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Ps. xlii. and xliii.

Comforting sayings—*Return unto thy rest, O my soul*, Ps. cxvi.

Exciting sayings—*Bless the Lord, O my soul*, Ps. ciii.

2. Which their souls have said to them.

Among the rest, this is one, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.* Where we have two things :

I. A doctrinal position or assertion. The Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus is a believer's portion.

II. A practical inference ; *Therefore will I hope in him.*

In this method I shall handle it.

I. For the doctrine—The Lord Jesus Christ is a believer's portion.

I shall show, 1. The meaning of the word.

2. What in Christ is that portion ; and,

3. What kind of portion Jesus Christ is.

For the first,—The meaning of the word. The word portion is sometimes taken for a piece or part of a thing, be it a less part or a bigger part.

Sometimes not for a part but the whole. We call our all our portion ; all we have to trust to, to live upon. Such a one hath so much, or so much for her portion ; provision made for her by her father. Now our heavenly Father hath made comfortable provision, set by a competent portion for every child of his, and that portion is Christ. He hath not divided Christ among them, given a part of him to one, and a part of him to another. Is Christ divided ? No ; but he hath given him all, all wholly and entirely to each one of them, so that each one may say, all Christ is mine, mine to all intents and purposes.

“The Lord,” said the Psalmist, “is the portion of mine inheritance,” Ps. xvi. 5. Instead of lands and livings assigned to us, he hath assigned Christ to us, as the Levites and priests were to have no other inheritance than the Lord, Numb. xviii. 20. So it is now. We are *heirs of God*, Rom. viii. 17 : His testimonies are our heritage, Ps. cxix. 111. Such a promise as that, Heb. xiii. 5. is better worth than a thousand a year ; “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

The Psalmist adds,—“and of my cup,” alluding to feasts, where each one had his mess of meat set by his cup-side, and that was his portion for that time, Gen. xliii. 34. 1 Sam. i. 4, 5. Now, the Lord is the portion of every good man’s cup, the mess he is to feed upon ; and a worthy mess he is, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Wicked men have a cup too, and

the portion of a cup; and what is it?—"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup," Ps. xi. 6. O fear and tremble lest this be your cup and your portion.

For the second,—What in Christ is a believer's portion?

All that he is, and all that he hath, both as God, and as God-man.

1. As God. All his wisdom, and power, and goodness is theirs. I say theirs, to be employed for their best benefit and advantage.

2. As God-man; as Mediator.

His merit and righteousness is theirs for justification; his blood for reconciliation; his sufferings and death to make atonement.

His Spirit and grace are theirs for sanctification; of his fulness they receive, John i. 16.

His comforts are theirs, to revive and refresh them when they are sad and drooping, Isa. l. 4. When the three young men were in the fiery furnace the Son of God was there; as, at another time, with a handkerchief wiping off sweat, and blood, and tears.

His word is for their guidance and direction in all their doubts and difficulties, like the pillar of cloud and fire.

His presence is theirs, for their preservation and protection in all their perils and dangers, Gen. xv. 1.

His crown, and throne, and kingdom are theirs, eternally to reward them, Rev. iii. 21.

For the third,—What kind of portion is Christ?

In general, he is a *worthy* portion—allusion to 1 Sam. i. 5.—that is, a dainty, delicate portion,

excelling all other ; none like it, worthy of all acceptation, that is to be readily accepted of, and closed with by each of us as soon as offered.

But in particular he is,

1. A soul portion—as here, He is my portion, saith my soul. The *portion of my heart*, Ps. lxxiii. 26. of my spirit, my inner man. The body with many people is well provided for, hath a large portion, whose soul in the mean time hath just nothing. Ah poor soul ! the belly full, Ps. xvii. 14. the barns full, Luke xii. 19. the coffers full, but the soul empty and unprovided for. The rich man was clothed, Luke xvi. 19. These were his *good things*, v. 25. his portion. Christ alone can be a soul's portion, because he alone can answer the necessities and needs, the desires and expectations, of a soul. Four things we want, which the whole creation hath not for us, but he hath them all, and hath them abundantly; 1 Cor. i. 30.—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.—Concerning the first, *wisdom*, Job makes hue and cry, and returns answer, *non est inventus—it cannot be found*, Job xxviii. 12, 14—28. The same is true of the rest. But in Christ they are to be had.

2. A sufficient portion. There is enough in him, enough and enough again to make us all happy. Merit enough, Spirit enough, grace enough, glory enough. He is El-Shaddai—God that is enough, Gen. xvii. 1.

3. A satisfying portion. The soul that hath him will own and acknowledge it hath enough, Ps. cxvi. 7. There is many a man who hath plentiful provision for this world, and yet is still thirsting after more ; like the daughters of the horseleech, crying, Give, give, Eccl. v. 10. The

reason is, God never put it into them to be our portion ; if he had they should have satisfied ; but he *hath* put it into Christ to satisfy, John iv. 13, 14. Not but that there are still desires after more, yet there is satisfaction with what is, nay, “ ‘They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house,” Ps. xxxvi. 8. “ As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness,” Ps. xvii. 15.

4. A sweet portion—exceedingly pleasant and delightful. It doth not only satisfy the soul that hath it, but fills it with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, Ps. xvi. 5, 6. It is a Canaan portion, which was a land flowing with milk and honey.

How sweet is the knowledge of Christ and gospel mysteries to the understanding part ! Phil. iii. 7, 8.

How sweet are the communications of his love and favour to the affecting part of the soul ! Ps. iv. 6, 7. Cant. ii. 3.

5. A suitable portion. If it were not suitable it would not be sweet ; if not proper not pleasant. All the comfort of marriage depends upon suitability. Christ is a meet help. Gen. ii.

6. A sure portion. We cannot say concerning any portion we have in this world, it is a sure portion. Many a child that hath thought himself or herself secure enough, that their portion hath been in good hands, in process of time, it hath proved otherwise, either through death or deceit, or some miscarriage or other. But a Christian’s portion, which is Christ, is to be sure in a good hand, Isa. lv. 3.

A part in Christ is, therefore, a good part, nay,

the best part, because it cannot be taken away from us.

“One thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her,” Luke x. 42.—*shall not* is a sweet word, and because Truth hath said it, I am bound to believe it.—“It *shall* not be taken away.”

It shall not while we live. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance : it is secured by the promise, and oath, and power of God.

We shall not waste it ourselves, as the prodigal son did his, and Adam his.

Neither men nor devils shall wrest it from us, John x. 28. It implies they will be trying, and endeavouring, but in vain.

It shall not when we die. If other portions be not taken from us, we must from them ; but “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It shall not to eternity. It is a lasting, everlasting portion. “God is my portion for ever,” Ps. lxxiii. 26.—for ever—a sweet word.

II. We notice the inferences to be drawn from hence, and the improvement we are to make of it.

1. Then it follows that Christ is a rich Christ, who hath wherewithal to portion such abundance of people, as in all ages and generations have been portioned by him. The apostle calls it the *unsearchable* riches of Christ, Eph. iii. 8. He is a bottomless mine of merit and spirit ; a boundless ocean of righteousness and strength ; a full fountain of grace and comfort. In him are hid all the

treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That may be said of him that can be said of no other, he hath a store that can never be emptied. O how should this endear him to us ! how should it draw out our thoughts and meditations into holy adorings of him ! as Cant. v. 9, 10.

2. Then all that are true believers are really and truly rich people. I do not mean rich in the world ; there are many of them far from that, poor day-labourers, poor servants in poor families ; but I mean, rich towards God, rich in his account and esteem, Luke xii. 21. James ii. 5. We read in Luke xvi. of a poor beggar called Lazarus, a godly man. And was he indeed poor, who when he died, was carried into Abraham's bosom ? Would you choose his condition, or the rich man's ? We are bid, Ps. xlviii. to walk about Zion. So walk about a believer's portion—count his bags, his coffers, his fields ; the grace he hath, the peace, the hope he hath ; and then tell me, if he be not a rich man. Job was once the richest man in the world, but on a sudden all was gone.—No, his grace remained with him, his patience, his faith, his hope.

3. Then how much doth it concern us all to make this portion ours.

May we do so ? We certainly may, each of us.

But how ? By a sincere, hearty, deliberate choice of it. Choose it, and thou shalt have it. Thus Mary did, Luke x. 42. " Mary hath chosen the good part."

Now choosing one thing implies refusing another.

We must refuse every thing else that you can name, and say of it, This is no portion for me.

As the pleasures of sin are not ; a merry

jovial, sensual, flesh-pleasing life, is not ; merry company is not ; wine and music are not ; strong drink is not ; rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, are not. Away with these then, they are no portion for thy soul.

And the riches and honours of the world are not ; gold and silver are not ; houses and lands are not ; mammon is not ; preferment is not : therefore covet them not, sit loose to them, live above them.

Further, our own merit and righteousness is not. It is a garment too narrow to cover us, a bed too short to stretch ourselves on ; therefore we must deny it, not trust to it, not rely on it.

What then must we take to ?

To Christ, and to him only ; *choose* him : that is, we must cordially accept of him upon the terms on which he is offered ; come to him, roll ourselves upon him, assent and consent to his laws and government, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ. None but Christ, to justify, sanctify, rule, save me. None but Christ, to be my Prophet, my Priest, my King. It is a sign God has chosen us for his portion, when we have chosen him, Deut. xxxii. 9. Zech. ii. 12. Thus Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26. Here was, first refusing, then choosing ; he weighed both in impartial scales, and upon mature deliberation took to that which he believed best. Something of that kind must be done in like manner by each of us. Though we have not such great things to refuse as he had, yet if we refuse what we have, and choose Christ, he becomes our portion. Now is this done ? have we thus refused, have we thus chosen ? If we have, blessed and happy are we ! If not, do it quickly, do it this day, do it now

Let thy soul say, Lord Jesus thou art, and shalt be, my portion ; let others choose as they list, my sister Martha as she pleases, to be cumbered with much serving, this is my choice. Tell God so, as David, "Thou art my portion, O Lord," Ps. cxix. 57. John xxi. 15.

There are four sorts of persons, who should especially hearken to this motion.

(1.) Those that are young. The days of your youth are the days of your choice, your choosing days. Now choose Christ, Eccl. xii. 1.

(2.) Those that are poor, and low in the world. Thy father perhaps left thee but a small portion, it may be, ten or twenty pounds ; it may be, fifty or a hundred pounds ; aye, but thy heavenly Father hath provided a rich portion for thee. He hath given his Son to be thy portion, and wilt thou say, I am well as I am, I will have none of him ? The less we have on earth the more need there is to make heaven sure ; lest we should be doubly poor, poor here, and for ever miserable.

(3.) Those that are convinced, whose eyes are in some measure opened, whose hearts God hath touched. You are specially concerned, for if you fail of Christ for your portion, when *almost persuaded, not far from the kingdom*, how sad will it be ! to go to hell by heaven's gates, like the foolish virgins ! Therefore choose, choose, I beseech you.

(4.) Those that have children, Gen. xvii. 7. I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed—by entail—upon the same terms.

5. Then if Christ be our portion, and we can make out our title upon good grounds, and that we have thus chosen, then it is our duty to *hope* in him ; as here, "Therefore will I hope in him,"

rely upon him, trust to him. People are used to do so in that which is their portion. I have a hundred pounds, says one, to live upon; another, I have two hundred; if the worst come to the worst that will maintain me. Is Christ thy portion? Nay, but is he so indeed? Thou hast then enough to live upon. If he be thy portion, he may well be thy hope, thy refuge.

A refuge—as to the things of this life. Thou art well provided for, thou shalt want no good thing, Ps. xxxiv. 10; cxlii. 5. If all thy creature comforts should fail, thou mayest rejoice in thy portion, which fails not, Hab. iii. 17, 18. As David, when all was gone, “he encouraged himself in the Lord his God,” 1 Sam. xxx. 6.—though flesh and heart fail. Suppose a traveller robbed, all about him taken away, yet if he has more at home, if his portion be safe—if his cisterns be drawn dry, yet if the fountain is flowing—he can rejoice. So should Christians rejoice in their portion.

A refuge—as to our everlasting condition. 1 Cor. xv. 19. We have hope in this life, but not in this life only. When we die all our other portions leave us, Ps. xlix. 17. and if we have no Christ to take to, how sad will it be! But if he *be* thine, fear not, thou mayest rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. “Why art thou, being the king’s son, lean from day to day?” 2 Sam. xiii. 4.

6. Then we should carry it as those whose souls can say the Lord Christ is their portion.

In all holy obedience before him, Ps. cxix. 57. fearing to offend him, caring to please him. For though it be not possible to lose the portion, it is possible to lose the comfort of it.

In a holy contempt of all other things in com-

parison with him. How high do some women carry it that know they have a great portion—they spend accordingly. So should we,—this is worthy, Col. i. 10. Remember, thou art a King's son. And we should carry it in holy joy, and cheerfulness of spirit, Phil. iv. 4.



CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIST IS OUR PROPITIATION.

And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John iv. 10.

JOHN, the beloved disciple, breathes nothing so much as love throughout this epistle. He gives us here a superlative instance of love—not ours to God, but God's to us, in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

DOCT. That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sent of God, to be the propitiation for our sins.

Show, I. The meaning of this.

II. What kind of propitiation Christ is.

III. What we learn from it.

I. Explain the meaning of this.

Propitiation is a hard word, but few understand it. It is used but thrice in all the New Testament,—here, 1 John ii. 2. and Rom. iii. 25. The latter word is used,* Heb. ix. 5. and there translated the mercy-seat,—“And over it the cheru-

bims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat,"—the propitiation.

1. In that sense it is true, Jesus Christ is our mercy-seat.

Now the mercy-seat was a broad plate of pure gold laid upon the ark, in which were the two tables of the law, for a covering to it, just as long and as broad every way as the ark was; having above it the two cherubims with their wings stretched out, between which was the Shechinah, or the manifestation of the presence and glory of God, who is said to dwell between the cherubims. See Exod. xxv. 17, 21. Now this mercy-seat was a type of Christ, he is our mercy-seat.

As that was of pure gold, so he is pure and perfect and without spot.

As that was just as long and as broad as the ark or coffer in which the law was, so Jesus Christ, by the obedience of his life, did fully answer to all the commands of the moral law, without failing or offending in the least tittle; just as long and as broad; and by the obedience of his death did fully perform all that was required by the mediatorial law laid on him by the Father.

As that covered the ark, and so was between the pure eye of God, dwelling between the cherubims, and the holy law put into the ark, so Jesus Christ comes between us, as sinners and transgressors of the law, and the wrath and vengeance of God due to us. It is therefore called the mercy-seat, because it is the blessed medium or mean of divine mercy towards us, Heb. viii. 12; the same word implying, it is through Christ alone as our mercy-seat.

2. It hath another signification—*propitiation*; which is as much as propitiatory sacrifice. Sac-

rifices among the Jews, by God's appointment, were of several sorts, with reference to the design and end of offering them. They were especially of four sorts :

Some were merely to honour God : those were called burnt-offerings, because the whole beast was burnt.

Others were, when something was wanting, to obtain it : those were peace-offerings, peace including every good thing.

Others were, when some mercy had been obtained, to give thanks for it ; called thank-offerings, Ps. cxvi. 17.

Others were, to make atonement for sin, called sin-offerings and trespass-offerings : a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, or the like, duly offered, was a means to make reconciliation for the sin of the offerer. Not that divine justice could be thereby satisfied, but the divine will and pleasure was thereby performed, and it *sanctified to the purifying of the flesh*, Heb. ix. 13. that is, continued to the offerer his right and title to all the privileges of the earthly Canaan, which by his sin he had forfeited. Now our sin-offering, trespass-offering, propitiatory sacrifice, is Jesus Christ : these all pointed at him ; they were the shadows, he is the substance, 1 Cor. 7. 2 Cor. v. 21.

II. What kind of propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice, or sin-offering, is Christ ?

1. Jesus Christ is a propitiation appointed of God. He did not put himself upon it, but was called to it. He that knew best what would please him, did himself set him forth, Rom. iii. 25. This is a great support to faith in our addresses for peace and pardon, Ps. lxxxix. 19. He is the same that brought the ram to Abraham.

2. He is a propitiation accepted of God, Eph. v. 2. Therefore acceptable to him, because appointed by him.

But how do we know that he was accepted ?

There were ways formerly of testifying acceptance by signs, as by fire coming down from heaven and kindling the sacrifice, Lev. ix. 34. 1 Kings xviii. 38.

But this was done by two extraordinary ways :

The one, by a voice from heaven, expressly affirming it, Matt. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5.

The other, by raising him from the dead. No other sacrifice ever was so ; no beast, Rom. iv. 25.

3. He is a spotless propitiation. The beast that made atonement must be so ; without defect, excess, blemish ; else no acceptance, Lev. xxii. 20. Now such was he ; conceived, born, lived, died, without sin, 1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. ix. 14.

4. He is a slain propitiation. Without blood there was no remission, and it must be life-blood. The beast must die, else it could not be a propitiatory sacrifice. Now Christ died to make atonement, Rom. v. 10 ; iii. 25—in his blood. The death he died was a bloody death, most bloody.

5. He is a voluntary propitiation, a free-will offering. Such the beasts offered in sacrifice were not, they would have lived if they might ; therefore *bound with cords*, Ps. cxviii. 27. Howbeit, the offerer was to be willing, Lev. i. 3. But here, the same was both the offerer and the offering ; and both willing, John x. 18. Eph. v. 25. Ps. xl. 7, 8. With the same severity wherewith he checked the devil, persuading him to worship him, Matt. iv. 10.—he checked Peter, dissuading him

from sufferings, Matt. xvi. 23. See Luke ix. 51 ; xii. 50.

Why then did he pray—"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" Matt. xxvi. 39.

To show that he had the sinless infirmities of human nature, one whereof is, to fear dying : which, if he had been without, his yielding to it would not have been so strange. A shame to us to be so backward in our duty to him.

6. He is a universal propitiation.

The only one—instead of all other sacrifices, though but once offered. The legal offerings were repeated often—yearly, nay daily, twice every day ; an evidence of their insufficiency. But Jesus Christ once only, and that once enough, Heb. ix. 25—28 ; x. 11, 12. If a plaister will cure a sore at once laying on, what need is there of a fresh one ? This condemns the popish mass, which themselves own must be repeated often.

It is of universal extent—to all that will accept of it, and close with it : "not for ours only," that is Jews, his countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh ; but to the Gentiles also, all the world over, John iii. 15. *the world*, consisting of Jew and Gentile, Isa. xlix. 6. 1 John ii. 2. This is good news for us sinners of the Gentiles ; if we sin, *we* have an advocate, *we* have a propitiation ; a sacrifice offered *for us*.

It is of universal extent likewise—to all sins, even presumptuous sins not excepted.

7. He is a complete propitiation. To a complete propitiation three things were required : a priest—an altar—and an offering.

If either of these were wanting there was no

atonement. Now all these three met here in Christ.

The offering was his human body and soul, that is, himself as a man, Eph. v. 2.—His body, Heb. x. 5, 10. His soul, Isa. liii. 10. The same nature that sinned, suffered.

The altar which sanctified the gift was not the cross, (what could the wood of the cross do towards that?) but the divine nature; the Godhead; the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. That was it that bore him up under his sufferings, as the altar did the sacrifice; and that gave worth and value to them, to make them a price sufficient, Acts xx. 28.

The priest was himself the offering, as God-man. See the definition of a priest, Heb. v. 1. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

Taken from among men. So was he.

Ordained. So was he, anointed, sealed—not without an oath, as Aaron, but with an oath, Ps. cx. 4.

For man. So was he; not for angels.

In things pertaining to God, to offer

Gifts, first-fruits, thank-offerings. So he, now in heaven, presents our prayers, praises, alms.

Sacrifices for sins. So he, *ut prius*—as before, himself upon the cross.

8. He is a continual propitiation; not continually to be offered, but of continual virtue and efficacy. We read often of the continual burnt-offering. The atonement made upon the cross reaches us now as fully as if he had died but yesterday. The last sinner that shall live to be reconciled and saved by him, shall certainly

find the truth of this. That burthen of the 136th Psalm, concerning God's mercy, may be sung also concerning Christ's merit,—it *endures for ever*. There is a fountain of it, Zech. xiii. 1. We come,

III. To the application of this.

Show, 1. What need there was of this propitiation; or propitiatory sacrifice. Might not God have spared his Son, and the Son have spared him? Wherefore was this waste? allusion to Mark xiv. 4.

It was no waste, the work of our redemption and salvation could not otherwise have been brought to pass, for ought we know.—To those that slight it, it is indeed waste.

We have sinned; have we not? by omission—by commission—in thought, word, and deed. Where is the man, the woman, the child, that can say, I have no sin, am under no guilt?

If we have sinned, God is angry with us. It cannot be otherwise. All sin is a provocation to the pure eyes of his glory; it grieves him; it vexes him; his holy nature is against it; so also is his righteous law, which forbids it, which threatens it, let the sinner be who he will, 2 Sam. xi. 27.

If God be angry, some course must be taken to appease and pacify him; it will not wear off of itself. There must be some propitiation, something to make atonement. Now what should that be? Ps. xl. 6. Mic. vi. 6, 7. This man bid fair, but it would not do. Nothing of our own, prayers, tears, alms, penances, pilgrimages, nothing of any one's else for us, will do, Ps. xlix. 7, 8. No, no; *he* is the propitiation, *he*, and none but he.

Show, 2. What is to be done by us, that he

may be our propitiation. I beseech you, hearken to this, for it is the main matter. Take away *propitiation* if you take away *our*—as to any comfort we can have in it.

In general, we must do it in like manner as the guilty Israelite was to do, when he brought his bullock or his lamb to make atonement for what he had done.

Now what was that ?

(1.) He was to lay his hand upon the head of the beast, Lev. i. 4. So must we lay a hand of faith upon Christ, making a believing application of his merit and righteousness, each of us, to ourselves—to our own soul, and to our own sin ;—who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me* ; a propitiation for *my* sins. Without this there is no atonement.

(2.) He was to confess his sin, and to tell why he brought his offering, Lev. v. 5. acknowledging if he had his desert he himself should die, and not the bullock. So must we—as David, Ps. li. 4. as Job, ch. xxxiii. 27, 22. as the prodigal, aggravating his fault against himself, Luke xv. with grief of heart and shame of face, and this with the hand on Christ's head, Zech. xii. 10. Now how have we done this ? do we use to do it daily, in ordinary, in extraordinary ?

(3.) He was to comfort himself, and to go away rejoicing in the atonement made, and to sin no more : so must we, Ps. lxxxv. 8. This is called receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 11.

Show, 3. What is like to become of us if this be not done, and if Christ be not our propitiation. We must each of us ourselves be made a sacrifice. It is usual in Scripture to set forth the judgments of God upon the wicked under this notion, Isa.

xxxiv. 6. Jer. xlvi. 10. Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. Hence God is styled a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. We are described as stubble. Now what work is there like to be, when fire and stubble meet! Isa. xxvii. 4.

Two things Christ suffered in being made a sacrifice :

Pain extraordinary, in body—in soul.

Shame extraordinary, in being crucified without the gate, naked, between two thieves, scoffed at.—Now pain and shame in extremity, and eternal, is hell; and that is the portion of those that must be their own sacrifice, Ps. ix. 17.

Pain in soul, from the gnawings of a guilty conscience, the worm that never dies,—Son, remember. In body, to be cast into a lake of brimstone and fire, into utter darkness, tormented, not a drop of water, Luke xvi.

Shame *without*; with wicked company—in the place of souls—God, saints, devils laughing; and all this eternal, Dan. xii. 2. Hear this, and fear, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. You that are delivered from all this, see the mercy of your deliverance by Christ your propitiation.

Show, 4. What must they do whose propitiatory sacrifice Christ is?

(1.) They must sacrifice themselves, soul and body, to him for a thank-offering, Rom. xii. 1, 2. Ps. li. 17.

(2.) They must sacrifice their sins absolutely and entirely, for a burnt-offering, a whole burnt-offering, Luke xix. 27. They must be crucified as he was, Gal. v. 24. Crucifixion is a slow but sure death.

(3.) They must sacrifice their all, freely and cheerfully, for him, if thereunto called,—estate,

name, liberty, life. As Abraham his Isaac, Gen. xxii. Rom. viii. 36. Compare this with Rev. vi. 9. Now how do we like this?



CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST IS OUR FREEDOM.

If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John viii. 36.

THIS *Son* here is, for certain, our Lord Jesus Christ; it can be no other; the *Son of God*, the *Son of man*, so as never any one was besides him.

That which is said here concerning him—the *Son*—or rather, which he says concerning himself, is,

I. That he hath a way of making people free, making himself over to them to be their freedom; *If the Son make you free*—this is implied.

II. That the freedom that he gives is extraordinary freedom; those that are made free by him are free *indeed*, no other freedom is like it, none to be compared with it; *ye shall be*—this is expressed. The explaining and proving of these two, together with the application, will be our present work.

I. Christ hath a way of making people free—he is their freedom.

Freedom supposes bondage. The people to

whom this was spoken, could readily enough reply to him, *We were never in bondage to any man*, v. 33. It was not true that they said, understand them in what sense you will.—Bondage is two-fold :

Corporeal, which is the bondage of the outward man ; and,

Spiritual, which is the bondage of the soul.

As to the former ; their fathers had been oft in sore bondage. Were they not so in Egypt to Pharaoh ; to the Philistines, and Ammonites, and Moabites, in the time of the Judges ? So for seventy years together in Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar ; nay, were not they themselves at this very time in bondage to the Romans ? But as to the latter, which is spiritual bondage, concerning which our Lord speaks ; they had never been otherwise than under that, v. 34. So that it was plainly the pride of their hearts ; they were loth to own their condition. So are others besides them, Rev. iii. 17. But whether we will own it or not, it is certain there is a spiritual bondage, which we are all under by nature, and from that bondage it is that Jesus Christ makes free.

We were born in bondage. Paul could say, in a civil sense, I was born free ; and so many of us say, but in a spiritual sense we cannot, for we were born captives, prisoners, slaves. O that God would make us this day sensible of the misery of such a condition, that if we be yet in it, we may make haste out of it ; and, behold, here is one who will help you out. If we be out of it, and are already made free, we may see what cause we have to be thankful all the days of our lives.

Have we not since sold ourselves to work wick-

edness, *sold to be* bondmen, 2 Pet. ii. 19.—*ever come?*

Three things are the cause of this bondage.

1. The guilt of sin. By that we are bound over to divine justice in a bond, the penalty whereof is eternal burning. Sinner, thou dost little think of this, but certainly it is so. Thy sins are thy debts, and they are bond debts, and the bond will be sued shortly; and there will be an arrest, and thou wilt be cast into prison, if some course be not taken to prevent it, Luke xii. 58, 59. Now from this we are made free by the Son's dying for us upon the cross, whereby he paid the debt, and fully satisfied God's justice; and had his acquittance, when he rose again from the dead, Rom. iv. 25.

2. The corrupt nature, called the sin that dwells in us; the flesh, the old man. By this we are so fettered and chained to divers lusts and pleasures, that we are perfect slaves; the drunkard is a slave to his lust of drinking; the wanton to his wantonness; the covetous man to money. One owned he was a slave to tobacco; another said, when he began to love it, meaning, to be a slave to it, he left it. And as to that that is good, there is no desire towards it; but quite the contrary; there is enmity and averseness. Just as it was with the poor woman, Luke xiii. 11, 16. she could not *lift up herself*. When Satan hath bound the soul it is crippled. Now from this we are made free by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as a sanctifier, renewing us in the whole man; breaking the power of indwelling sin, planting a contrary principle, Rom. vi. 14—19, 22.

3. The fear of death. Fear generates bondage, which bondage is more or less according as the

thing feared is, and according as the fear prevails, in the measure and degree of it. Now we are all by nature subject to this bondage, through fear. Though it does not appear alike in all, there are few but one time or other have their qualms upon every apprehension of danger; though not every one to such an excess as Belshazzar, whose knees knocked against each other, or as Herod, who feared lest John was risen from the dead.

From this we are set free by the same Spirit as a comforter, abating this slavish fear, and working holy boldness and confidence; so that now the man can cheerfully look death in the face; can look God himself in the face, knowing he is a reconciled Father, Rom. viii. 15, 16. The death of Christ purchased this, Heb. ii. 14. and the Spirit of Christ applies it to the soul. Let him be afraid to die that is afraid to go to heaven. But,

II. What kind of freedom is it? In general,

1. A freedom *indeed*, that is, real freedom, substantially free. It is no fancied thing, no dream. Many a man that ruffles in the world, and is the world's freeman, doth but seem free; really he is a slave, under the power of sin and the devil. But if the Son have made thee free, thou art free *indeed*—free from the guilt of all thy sins past, from the beginning of the world to this day; free from the power and dominion of sin, for time to come. It may tyrannize over thee, but it no longer *reigns* in thee, of *choice* and with *consent*;—free from slavish fear, causing bondage.

2. It is *inward* freedom. The soul is made free, the mind and conscience. Now the soul is the man, the better, the more noble part. If it be

well with that, all is well.—Though thy outward condition be low and mean, perhaps a poor servant, the drudge in the family, an apprentice to some hard master, working hard, and faring hard; no matter, if the Son have made thee free, thou art free to God, the Lord's freeman, 1 Cor. vii. 22.

3. It is *costly* freedom; it cost him dear that obtained it for us; namely, the Son.

There are two ways of obtaining freedom for captives.

The one by force; fighting to procure it.

The other by price; paying a sum of money for ransom.

Both these ways the Son obtained our freedom for us.

He paid a price for it to the Father, bought it out, even the price of his own most precious blood, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 19. Less would not serve; either that or nothing.

He fought it out with the devil, and death, and the grave, and by strength of hand rescued us. It is true, himself was taken prisoner, but they could hold him but awhile, Acts ii. 24. Thus he is *made redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

4. It is *comfortable* freedom. Comfortable to us, that enjoy the benefit of it. It is attended with many exceeding great and precious privileges, which should each of them be so many arguments with us, if we are not free, to desire and seek it; if we are, to rejoice in it and be thankful for it. Those that are free of corporations enjoy many immunities and franchises, which strangers are unconcerned in, for the having of which, they serve seven years. But what are those to believers' franchises? what to those that belong to

God's freemen? And, which is more, they may be thine immediately, this very day, without seven years' service to obtain them. Allusion to 1 Sam. xvii. 25.

What are the privileges of the Lord's freemen?

In general they are of two sorts:

Those we have by the way, now, in possession.

1. There are sundry evil things that we are free from:

(1.) The guilt of sin; which is taken away by the pardoning mercy of God in the blood of Christ. Even this, where it is denominated a man, a blessed man, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

(2.) The domineering power of sin; so that it is no more on the throne in us, Rom. vi. 14. Though it remain, it doth not reign. It is as the Canaanites were in Canaan, after the Israelites had conquered it; they were under tribute.

But some one may say, I find the power of sin great in me.

But art thou a willing servant to it, as formerly? dost thou *yield* thy members? I hope not so, you reply; I can truly say, the evil I would not that I do, and though with my flesh I serve the law of sin, yet with my spirit the law of Christ. Then be of good comfort—the freedom is gradual.

(3.) The irritating power of the law;—this is said to be the *strength of sin*, as water to lime, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Sin takes occasion by the commandment, Rom. vii. 8. If such and such things were not forbidden, we should have no mind to them; but now, when enjoying this freedom, it is otherwise. There is then in the heart a dear love to the law of God; the will consents to it, rejoices in it.

(4.) The unscriptural commands, injunctions, and impositions of men in religious matters, wherein we have to do immediately with God. Not their civil commands in civil things. We say not so, Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. Nor the scriptural commands in sacred things, as when they command days of public fasting or thanksgiving when there is occasion, because for this there is warrant in the word of God. The king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, and the good kings of Judah. But their unscriptural commands in the things of God, when they lay a necessity upon those things wherein the gospel calls to liberty : in such a case we are bid to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," Gal. v. 1. 1 Cor. vii. 23. Herein the Pharisees were faulty ; and see what the Master says, Matt. xxiii. 9, 10.

(5.) The *evil* of afflictions : not from afflictions themselves ; the best men have oftentimes a larger share of those than others ; but from the evil of them, Ps. xci. 10. The evil of an affliction is the wrath of God in it. As much as there is of that in it, so much there is of real evil. Now, by the Son we are freed from that wrath ; his blood hath pacified it. That which afflicts is love, for our good, Rev. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 5—8.

(6.) The sting of death and the grave. Not from death itself, nor the grave itself, but from the *sting* of it. What that is, we read, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Now sin is done away, therefore death is unstung ; it may hiss and frighten, but it cannot hurt.

2. There are sundry good things that we are free to.

(1.) We have freedom of access to the throne of grace ; we may come thither as oft as we will,

and stay there as long as we will. The oftener we come, and the longer we stay, the more welcome we are, Heb. iv. 16. Liberty of speech, free to speak our whole mind. It is through the Son, Heb. iv. 15. We would account this a privilege were it to the presence of an earthly prince or potentate. One said he would desire no more towards the making of him rich, than an interview for one hour in a day with his king.

(2.) We are free to all the promises in the whole Bible. Take which thou wilt, if Christ be thine, thou hast an interest in it, a right to it, and mayest comfortably plead it, as if named in it. This is clear from Heb. xiii. 5. a promise made to Joshua upon a particular occasion, yet *we* may say *the same*.

(3.) We are free to the lawful and comfortable use of every good creature of God. This is certainly one thing wherein the Son hath made us free. For instance, in our good, 1 Tim. iv. 3—5. Some have thought, and taught, and themselves practised, otherwise; but it is a mistake. They may as well revive and establish the whole law of Moses in those matters. The reason ceases, it is not such blood now that atones. It is true, in Acts xv. there was a temporary appointment with reference to their present circumstances, but it was but temporary, and those ceasing, the injunction ceased, Titus i. 15. We do not live now among Jews, likely to be offended.

Those we are to have at home hereafter in the other world.

No condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. No wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. No Depart ye cursed. But a crown and kingdom that fadeth not away. All the Lord's freemen are heirs, heirs of God and

joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. We are free to heaven now, every day, in our daily addresses, and we shall be free to the mansions there when we go hence, John xiv. 2, 3.

USES. Hence we learn,

1. What a difference there is between one man and another, according as they are, or are not, in Jesus Christ.

Those that are in Christ Jesus are the Lord's freemen. The Son hath made them free, and they are blessed and happy; they are more *excellent* than their neighbours, upon all these accounts, Acts xvii. 11.

Those that are not in Christ Jesus are the devil's bondmen; rowing in his galley; tugging at his oar; doing his drudgery, Luke xv. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 26. having first overcome them, 2 Pet. ii. 19. Amongst men, what a difference there is between a servant and a master, an apprentice and a freeman: With a great sum, saith the captain, purchased I this freedom, Acts xxii. 28.

2. How much it concerns each of us to examine, as to ourselves, which of the two am I? Hath the Son *made me* free? It may be known, and it were good for us to know.

Those that the Son hath made free, cannot but be sensible of a great change from what was to what is. Were the Israelites, think you, sensible when they were out of Egypt, and afterwards, when out of Babylon? Those poor men that have been at Algiers in slavery to the Turks, and are come home again, some by flight, some by exchange, some by ransom, (they come often to your doors,) ask them, Are they sensible of a change? they will tell you, Aye. Canst thou say, I was darkness, dead, blind, captive; but

now, I enjoy the light, I am alive, I see, I am free?

They are endued with a free spirit. There is certainly such a spirit, and it is one of the excellent spirits, Ps. li. 12. free to every good work, ready, willing, forward, Ps. cxxii. 1; xxvii. 8; cxix. 108. Not perfectly or universally so, but then it is free.

3. What is to be done that we may be made free? There is no way but one, and that is, to apply ourselves to the blessed Jesus, the Son here spoken of.

Tell him thy sense of present bondage, thy desire to be made free, and thy consent to the gospel terms; tell him that thou art weary of sin's service, and art willing to be his servant, or rather freeman. Know for thy encouragement, he is sent on purpose. Isa. lxi. 1. Compare Luke iv. 18. The gospel proclamation is like that of Cyrus, Ezra i. 1, 5. Could I assure all apprentices, servants, suppose all prisoners, galley-slaves, of freedom, how welcome would be the tidings!

4. What must they do that are made free?

They must own their deliverance and their deliverer with all thankfulness. The bells ring when the time of servitude is out, Ps. xvi. 16. Sing the song of Moses, Exod. xv. 1. Compare Rev. xv. 3.

They must stand fast in their liberty, and press to be made more free.

They must promote and further the freedom of others. Tell them the difference you have found.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST IS OUR FOUNTAIN.

*In that day there shall be a fountain opened .
the house of David, and to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.—
Zechariah xiii. 1.*

THIS fountain is the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom it is here promised, that he should be an open fountain, implying, till then he had been a fountain shut up, a fountain sealed. And so he was.

Now, 1. We are told here concerning the time when it should be—in *that day*; that is, in the gospel day, the famous day of the New Testament, when God was manifested in the flesh, taking our nature upon him, and becoming incarnate. Then this fountain began to be opened. It was opened more and more after his resurrection, when the apostles went forth and preached the gospel to all the world. What was the tidings they brought? Behold, a fountain opened; behold, a Redeemer, a Saviour; as the angel told at first, Luke ii. 10.

2. Concerning the persons for whose use this fountain shall be opened,—it is said, *the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*. Those were, first the nation and people of the Jews; to them first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless “them, in turning away every

one from his iniquities," Acts iii. 26. In all places where they came, they began with them, Acts xvii. 1, 2. But upon their refusal, they turned and opened it to the Gentiles, Acts xviii. 5, 6. And it was well for us that it was so—*The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem* now, are the Christian church, scattered far and wide, here and there, upon the face of the whole earth. Among them it is that this fountain is open, not elsewhere: The rest of the world knows nothing of it.

3. Concerning the intent and design of opening it, and that is, *for sin and for uncleanness*. That is a brave fountain indeed, that will wash from *sin, and from uncleanness*—that is,

From sin, which is uncleanness, polluting and defiling the soul, as dust or mire doth the body. And,

From all sin, and particularly from that sin, which we commonly call the sin of uncleanness. Seventh-commandment sins of all sorts. There is cleansing to be had even for them. And where? At this fountain; namely, with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is made unto us of God, amongst other things, *our fountain*.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is our fountain.

Show, I. Wherein.

II. What kind of fountain.

III. The application.

I. Wherein is Christ a fountain?

When it is said Christ is our fountain, it holds forth two things:

1. Fulness. A fountain is not like a cistern: a cistern may be full, but the fulness of it may be emptied; so may the fulness of a fountain too, but

then a fountain, or a spring, fills itself again immediately. So doth not a cistern. A cistern may be full, but it doth not rise up and run over, as a fountain doth, and that continually. For this reason the corrupt nature in us is compared to a fountain, Jer. vi. 7.—bubbling up in vain thoughts, inordinate desires, corrupt affections. Now in Jesus Christ there is a fulness, and it is a fountain-fulness, Col. i. 19. *fulness—all fulness, and all fulness dwelling, and by the good pleasure of the Father.*

What is he full of?

The two things that our poor souls have most need of, towards the making of us happy.

Merit and righteousness for justification; and Spirit and grace for sanctification.

He hath merit enough; his merit is of infinite value, sufficient to take away all sin, Heb. vii. 25.—*able to save.* And

He hath Spirit enough, to sanctify us throughout, to break the power of every lust, to strengthen us to every good word and work.

He is such a fountain as can open in us a fountain, springing up unto eternal life, John iv. 14. John i. 16.

2. Usefulness.

A fountain is of great use. What striving was there in Abraham's time, and Isaac's time, and Jacob's time, about wells of water, Gen. xxi. and xxvi. When Achsah was to ask a boon of her father Caleb, *Give me*, said she, *springs of water*, Judges i. 15. Were we to ask but one thing of our heavenly Father, there were reason it should be, Lord, give us a fountain. Why, blessed be his name, he hath given us one. Not only, springs of water, useful for our outward man, a *land of*

springs, like Canaan, but a Christ, a Christ for our souls.

A fountain of water is useful for three things :

(1.) For quenching of thirst. How glad is the weary traveller, or labourer, of a spring of water; though it be but fair water. O, says he, it hath saved my life. The Israelites in the wilderness, when there was no water, what an affliction was it to them. When they had it, it was sweet as honey and oil, 1 Cor. x. 4.

Now this fountain is very useful for this purpose. Is thy soul athirst? athirst for peace, pardon, life, salvation, for grace, strength? Here is a fountain for thee, come and drink, Isa. lv. 1—buying frightens; therefore, come freely. Thou art called, John vii. 37. Rev. xxii. 15. See the discourse of our Lord Jesus with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 10—14. Alas! the most of men know not what this means—they are sensible of no need, and, therefore, of no desire, but, Ps. xlii. 1, “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

(2.) For washing away filth. Water cleanses; we could not tell what to do without it—to make our bodies, our clothes, comfortable. This fountain also is cleansing. Sin defiles, leaves a blot, a stain, upon the soul.—It is uncleanness.

The guilt of it is so: from that we are washed by the blood of Christ, satisfying God's justice and making atonement; also purging the conscience—1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. Heb. ix. 14.

The corrupt nature, which is the root and principle of it, is so, Ps. xiv. 3. From this the Spirit of Christ washes in the laver of regeneration, Tit iii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(3.) For watering the earth, and making it

fruitful. They use to have fountains for that purpose in their gardens, to be ready in a dry season to fetch water to refresh the plants. Herein also Christ is our fountain. Did he not water us every moment, grace in us would languish and die, Isa. xxvii. 3. · See Isa. xlv. 3, 4. Now it is the second of these especially that this text speaks of—Jesus Christ is a cleansing fountain; we have need of him as such, for we are filthy and defiled.

II. What kind of fountain is the Lord Jesus?

As a cleansing fountain he hath these properties.

1. He is full, he hath enough wherewithal to cleanse us; merit enough, Spirit enough. Under the law they had cleansing appointments as to ceremonial pollutions, but ours is beyond theirs.

They had blood, but it was but the blood of bulls and goats, and that in a basin only; but we have the blood of the Son of God, not in a basin, but a fountain full of it.

They had water; one particularly called the water of purification, made of the ashes of a red heifer, kept in a pot for the purpose, Numb. xix. 9. But that availed nothing towards taking away the moral pollution. The blood of Christ doth that. The papists, in imitation of this, have holy water; a mere vanity. They had also water in a brazen laver of vast extent, in Solomon's time, for the priests to wash in when they drew near to worship, 1 Kings vii. 23, 26. Compare 2 Chron. iv. 5. But what is all that to a fountain? In this fountain we are to wash every day, especially when we draw near in duties of worship; Ps. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency;

so will I compass thine altar, O Lord,"—that is, in Christ's blood, which makes as if innocent.

2. He is a flowing fountain. It is of the nature of a fountain to flow forth; if it doth not flow, it is not a fountain. There are continual issues every day from the blessed Jesus, both for justification and sanctification, or we were undone. This was signified by the blood and water that came out of his side.

3. He is a holy fountain. We have a spring in this county called by name Holy-well,* but it makes none holy that go to it; it is well if it de-file not some by the superstition of it; but here is a holy well indeed, and holy water indeed, that makes them holy, holy, that are washed in it. How unclean soever before, if washed with the grace of Christ that uncleanness is done away. We are made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.—not in perfection at first, but by degrees, renewed more and more till presented without-spot to God, Eph. v. 27—faultless, Jude 24. O the rare virtue that is in this fountain; it makes a sinner a saint.

4. A healing fountain.

In John v. we read of a pool, called the pool of Bethesda, which had a healing virtue. This is the true Bethesda. Our uncleanness is like that of the leprosy, a disease; this cleanses, as Naa-

* In Flintshire.

1707—8, July 13. Went to visit at Newmarket. My wife and daughter with me. We called at Holywell. I was much affected to see a papist long in the well, praying and crossing herself. Surely they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. We can scarce persuade people to pray in their warm closets. They pray, and pray long, in the cold water, and are reproached for it. They shame us. *Rev. Matthew Henry's Diary, MSS.*

man by washing in Jordan, 2 Kings v.—as the leper in Siloam.

5. An open fountain. If it were of greater virtue than it is, and were shut up, what the better should we be? No, it hath pleased the Father to lay him *open*. He is not an enclosed fountain, but a common fountain; as a common propitiation, so a common fountain, 1 John ii. 1, 2.—As common as the light or air.

Open and common to all persons, Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; whosoever will may come.

Open at all times, night or day, summer or winter, John viii. 2.—*early in the morning*, John iii. 2. Nicodemus *by night*, and both found entertainment with him—Allude to Gen. xxix. 8. There is no stone to be rolled away.

Open and free as to terms. We say—What is freer than a gift? He is the gift of God, John iv. 10. the *free* gift, Rom. v. the *unspeakable* gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. Though thou hast no worthiness, no matter, he is worthy. Cordial acceptance makes him ours. He forgives freely, Isa. xliii. 25.

6. The only fountain. Besides him there is no other, Acts iv. 12. We may think, perhaps, as Naaman—“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?” 2 Kings v. 12. But no other fountain will do.

III. The application, in four particulars.

1. Here is matter for thanksgiving to God, who,

(1.) Appointed this fountain in the counsel of his will from all eternity, John iii. 16.

(2.) Opened it in the fulness of time, after it had been shut for four thousand years, Gal iv. 4.

(3.) Opened it *to us*; to us of this nation, coun-

try, neighbourhood ; of this present age and generation. Here is matter of thanksgiving, that the gospel is not a hidden gospel to us, that it is yet day-time with us, that we are within hearing of the joyful sound.

(4.) And, specially, that he hath brought us to it, and washed us in it. This is certainly the mercy of mercies,—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” Rev. i. 5. This is more than angels can say. When ten lepers were cleansed, only one returned to give thanks, Luke xvii.

2. Here is matter for conviction ; and O that I knew what to say, and how to order my speech, so that it might be convincing ; but Elihu, “my God is he” that must do it. Convincing ! Of what ? Of your need of this fountain to wash in.—That which is unclean doth certainly need washing ; but thou art unclean, I mean, thy soul, thy mind, thy conscience ; inwardly, spiritually. I am sure thou wast so by nature ; born in guilt and filth ; like an infant weltering in blood and pollution, Ezek. xvi. And art thou washed ? When, and how ? And by whom, and with what ?

I am sure, that every sin thou hast committed hath added to that original pollution, and hath made thee more and more filthy, Ps. cvi. 39. Matt. xv. 19, 20. Even vain thoughts, Jer. iv. 17. So is the world also, James i. 27. Nay, our best duties have their pollutions, Isa. lxiv. 6. But there is one particular kind of sins, those against the seventh commandment, that is especially called uncleanness. And have we been in no sort guilty of that, neither in thought, word, nor deed ? That query of Solomon’s is a searching one—“Who can say, I have made my heart

clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9.—Even those that are washed have need to wash their feet, John xiii. 10.

3. Here is matter for exhortation :

(1.) To that which is best. To keep yourself clean, and to keep your way clean, which must be by taking heed thereto according to the divine word, Ps. cxix. 9. Apply to the fountain.

(2.) To that which is next best. If any pollution happen, to make haste to your fountain, and wash speedily ; I mean to the Lord Jesus, confessing, bewailing, believing. The sooner the better—as in the case of other dirt ; allude to 2 Kings v. Go wash seven times. You that have never been with him for mercy, for grace, have most need of all. Feel it, and believe there is a fountain just by thee ; allude to Gen. xxi. 19.

4. Here is matter for encouragement. This sweet promise hath relieved many a poor soul that hath been sinking.

(1.) That it is a fountain ; therefore, mercy enough, merit enough.

(2.) That it is an open fountain, not under lock and key, but free and common to all ; none excepted, that except not themselves by unbelief.

(3.) That it is to the house of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem ; that is, all the members of the visible church.

(4.) That it is for sin indefinitely, and particularly for uncleanness

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRIST IS OUR WISDOM.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom. 1 Cor. i. 30.

THIS plainly and expressly proves what I affirm concerning Jesus Christ, that he is made unto us of God *wisdom*; not only that he is wise, nay wisdom itself, *v.* 24. and Prov. i. and viii. but that he is made *unto us* wisdom, and that *God* made him so; that is, God the Father, who first puts us into him. We were not born in him, but we are put into him by renewing grace, as a graft or scion into the stock, and then he makes him to us *wisdom*.—So that here are four things asserted :

1. The original and fundamental privilege of all true believers; they *are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1.

2. A consequent privilege following upon that; thereupon *he is made unto us wisdom*.

3. The sole author both of the one and of the other, and that is *God*, God the Father—of him, are ye in Christ Jesus.

4. The scope, end, and design of this, *v.* 31.—‘that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.’

Doctr. That Jesus Christ is made of God wisdom to all true believers that are truly in him.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What practical inferences may be drawn from it.

I. How are we to understand this ?

1. *Objectively.* As he alone is the object about which all true wisdom is conversant, Col. ii. 3. Wisdom is either divine or human, the wisdom of God, or of men.

He is the *wisdom* of God, as the *power* of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. because the divine power and the divine wisdom were never so manifest in any thing that ever he did as they were in Christ, that is, in the great work of our redemption by him. All his works are made in wisdom, Ps. civ. 24. Prov. iii. 19. The footsteps of it are to be seen in all the creatures, in the several parts and members, and their proportions, especially man, Ps. cxxxix. 14. He governs the world in wisdom, wisely ordering all events to the great end of his own glory, and his people's good : when we murmur, we charge God with folly, Job i. But above all, in our redemption by Christ ; in the contrivance of it, finding out such a way wherein righteousness and peace are met together, mercy glorified, and yet justice satisfied. In Eph. iii. 10. it is called the manifold wisdom of God, such as angels wonder at.

He alone is the object of all *our* true wisdom. There are other things about which wisdom is conversant, but none like Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8. Our chief wisdom consists in closing with that wise design of the Father, acquainting ourselves with it, assenting and consenting to it, acquiescing in it, John xvii. 3. So that if you ask, who is a truly wise man ? I answer, he that is truly a Christian, not that is barely called so, but that understands, believes,

and acts as such, Deut. iv. 6. They are called *Wisdom's children*, Luke vii. 35. The world counts them a company of fools, but God esteems them wise.

2. *Effectively*, as he is the author and finisher of all that in us which is true *wisdom*. Now, that is *grace*; grace is true wisdom, and nothing else is so. It is not wisdom to be wise to do evil, wise, as Ahithophel was, to plot mischief; nor is it wisdom to be able to manage affairs dexterously and to advantage; but wisdom is, to know Christ Jesus the Lord. Now whence have we this wisdom? It is the Spirit of Christ that works it in us, Eph. i. 17. 1 John v. 20. He is the author, Heb. xii. 2. Of his fulness we receive, John i. 16. His is the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. But, further, for explication—It may be inquired,

1. *How is it said he is made unto us of God wisdom?*

(1.) In respect of eternal appointment and designation. The Father did from everlasting ordain, decree, and purpose, that his Son, Christ, should be a common head to us, deriving wisdom to all his members; a common fountain, whence they should fetch it. The head in the body we reckon the seat of wisdom; here so, Col. i. 19. compare John i. 16.

(2.) In respect of effectual application, in the fulness of time. He is then made wisdom to us when we begin to be made wise by him, and that is when we are savingly converted. Then, and not till then, are we turned to *the wisdom of the just*, Luke i. 17. But,

2. *What are the special acts of this wisdom, by which it may appear whether we are so turned, so made wise?*

(1.) If Christ be *made unto us wisdom*, we have been in some measure convinced of our own folly and foolishness; this is the first step, 1 Cor. iii. 18. A fool thinks himself wise, Prov. xxvi. 12. As the Pharisees, John ix. 40. A wise man knows himself a fool, as David, Ps. lxxiii. 22. Agur, Prov. xxx. 2, 3. Now inquire, How is it with me? What is the opinion I have of myself?

(2.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we are brought to see the excellency and usefulness of wisdom, and begin to prize it at a high rate, and to beg it of God rather than any thing else in the world. As the pulse of desire beats, the man is; not desire in word and tongue, not in sudden flashes of wishing and woulding, but the inward, hearty, settled desire—as of *joy*, Ps. cxxxvii. 6. Not the desire *in* the heart, but *of* the heart. Would we do as Solomon, seek an understanding heart? have we done so? 1 Kings iii. 5. If God should say to us, as to him, “I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart,” it would be a good evidence of being saved.

(3.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have chosen God for our chief good and highest end, and the Lord Jesus Christ as our alone way to him. If so, we are wise; if not, to this day we are fools. The proper act of wisdom is to determine the choice to right ends; as in other things, so in spiritual things, the things of the soul. Inquire what is your chief good and highest end. Is God, to please and honour him? or elf? Can you say, with the Psalmist “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,” Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

There are few who can say this. Paul complains that "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Phil. ii. 21. To seek Christ's things is to seek such things as he sought. Now *those* were, to please his Father. And have you learnt Christ as your way, and do you walk in him? Can you say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

(4.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath taught us to fear the Lord, and to depart from evil, Job xxviii. 28. There is this difference between wisdom and knowledge—knowledge is in speculation, wisdom is in practice. Many have a great deal of the former, that have none of the latter; good heads, but bad hearts and bad lives. See the properties of heavenly wisdom, James iii. 17. It was thus with David, Ps. cxix. 98—101. Eph. v. 15, 16.

(5.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath made the things of time to be as nothing to us, and the things of eternity to be all in all; it has altered our thoughts and pursuits. Inquire how is it with us as to this. Can we say, as Paul, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal?" 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Things that are seen, and not seen, are either good things, or evil things.

What are the good things temporal, riches, honour, pleasure, in comparison with the good things eternal, the vision and fruition of the blessed God, and the blessed Jesus? Can we despise the former for the latter, as Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26.

What are the evil things of time in comparison

with the good things of eternity?—Whether are we most afraid of the frowns of men or the frowns of God, a prison or hell? It was a high charge against Job, but false, “Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction,” Job xxxvi. 21. Daniel chose to disobey the king rather than God, Dan. vi. So did the three young men, Dan. iii.

II. The practical inferences.

If Christ be made wisdom to those that are in him, and only to those, then,

1. They that are not in him are not wise. Nay, I must speak plain, they are fools. Nabal is their name, and folly is with them. We are forbidden to say to our brother, Thou fool, under the pain and penalty of hell-fire, Matt. v. 22. that is, in wrath and bitterness to judge any person as to his eternal estate, but not, when it is spoken out of love, to convince; and, God knows, that is my end. Paul calls the Galatians, *foolish* Galatians, Gal. iii. 1. Christ calls the two disciples, nay, and all the rest of them in that matter, *fools*, Luke xxiv. 25. I speak it to your consciences, and if your consciences speak it to you, hearken to them—Unconverted Christless people are fools.

I prove it by three arguments:

(1.) They choose like fools. Is he not a fool, that when a pebble is offered to him by one, and a pearl by another, chooses the pebble, and refuses the pearl? Was not Esau a fool, in parting with his birthright for a mess of pottage? O sinner, whatever thou thinkest of it now, the day is coming, when thou wilt call thyself a thousand fools, for preferring the trash of this world before the heavenly treasure—the dross, the dirt, of the earth, before the glories of the eternal kingdom!

It is recorded of Mary, as an act of the highest wisdom, and she is commended for it, that she chose to sit at Christ's feet, to hear his wisdom, Luke x. 42; as the queen of Sheba at Solomon's. See Luke xi. 31.

(2.) They count like fools.

They count themselves wise, and religious people a company of fools, when themselves are the fools, and the religious wise, John vii. 48, 49. Luke xviii. 10.

They count upon time to come as their own, and presume accordingly; when, alas! it is not so. He that reckoned upon time is properly styled a fool, Luke xii. 20. They count upon going to heaven when they die, but are miserably mistaken, as the madman at Athens, that pleased himself with the conceit that all the laden ships were his.

(3.) They carry it like fools.

The carriage of a fool is vain and frothy; there is no seriousness in him. Are there not many such with whom it is so? Art not thou one of them? "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief," Prov. x. 23. Art thou under the power of a vain mind?

He carries it like a fool, that hugs his worst enemy in his bosom, and turns his back upon his best friend; and doth not the sinner so? Is not sin thy enemy, the devil thy enemy? and are not they made much of, and Christ, thy best friend, slighted and made nothing of? One of the fathers brings in the devil pleading against such at the day of judgment—Lord, doth not this man deserve to be damned, that would be ruled by me, that never did any thing for him, and would not?

2. They that are sensible of their want of

wisdom, and would be wise, may learn hence whither to go, and what to do, that they may attain it. The way is to apply thyself to the blessed Jesus, who is *made unto us of God wisdom*. He is our Joseph. As they that wanted corn must go to Joseph, so they that want grace, any grace, the grace of wisdom, must go to Christ, and plead this text with him—Lord, art thou *not made unto us of God wisdom*?

What need is there of this plea?

Universal need, every day, in every thing. They that have most, have need of more.

(1.) We cannot carry it as we should in any relation without wisdom, neither as superiors, inferiors, nor equals.

What need have magistrates of wisdom! Ps. ii. 9.—A conviction of this made Solomon ask as he did, 1 Kings iii. 7—10.

Ministers are in the same situation, Col. i. 28. What a plague are foolish shepherds! Zech. xi. 15. On the other hand it is promised, “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding,” Jer. iii. 15.

So are masters of families, husbands, wives, parents—They all need wisdom that they do not miss it by severity so much, or indulgences too much.—Neighbours especially need it: if without wisdom how can we walk in it, Col. iv. 5. so as that we may do them good, and they do us no hurt?

(2.) Nor can we carry it as we should, in any condition, without wisdom.

If we prosper and thrive in the world, there is need of wisdom, to manage it so that we be not ensnared, not destroyed by it. If in affliction it

is necessary, that we may keep the mean between fainting and despising. If reproached, reviled, persecuted, to carry it as we ought towards our persecutors, with meekness and yet with courage. James i. 3—5.

(3.) Nor can we carry it as we should in any duty to be done to God or man without wisdom.

If we pray, we need wisdom that we do not ask amiss. If we hear the word, we need wisdom that we may discern between wheat and chaff, that we may take our own portion. If we wish to reprove, we need wisdom to know when, how, Col. iii. 16. If to reconcile differences, 1 Cor. vi. 5 ; if to manage good discourse, Prov. xxxi. 26.—to attend our particular calling, so as not to entrench upon our general calling ; to keep the world in its due place : we require wisdom in all.

(4.) Nor can we carry it as we should in any difficult case that lies before us, nor tell how to determine for the best, without wisdom, Eccl. x. 10. I may spare my pains to prove we have need of it ; we all know it and feel it by ourselves, if we know and feel any thing.

How is it to be supplied ?

I told you, by having recourse to the blessed Jesus in a humble sense of our need, Prov. iii. 5, 6.

We must pray ; as Paul, Acts ix. 6. James i. 5.

We must study the word ; that must be our Abel, our counsellor, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, Col. iii. 16. What that speaks, Christ speaks.

We must then believe, put on Christ, learn Christ, walk in Christ, which is the certain way to be made wise.

3. Here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all

true believers, that *Jesus Christ is made wisdom*, that is, as some interpret it, that all that infinite wisdom that is in him as God, and all that infused wisdom which he had as God-man wherein he grew, Luke ii. 52. is all made over to us, to be employed for our good. Dost thou know the meaning of this? If there be any matter or thing wherein that wisdom may stand thee in any stead, it is thine; as if a woman marry a wise counsellor, or a wise physician, if she need the help of either, it is ready: so it is here. Allude to Prov. xxxi. 11. Apply it,

1. To our particular private affairs, especially in the great turns of our lives. If thou art in Christ, he will order them for thee, and he will order them wisely, Eph. i. 11. according to the counsel of his will. Therefore, cast thy care upon him, commit thy way unto him, Ps. xxxvii. 3—5. Isa. xxx. 18.

Therefore, submit to his disposals, quietly, patiently; of choice, cheerfully: wisdom would have it so, sees it best it should be so, and shall I gainsay?

2. To the public affairs of the church and nation. Our enemies are not only many, mighty, malicious, but cunning, crafty, subtle; there are Ahithophels amongst them. No matter, wisdom is our friend, knows how to undermine and countermines, Job v. 12; as he did Haman. The pilot is wise, though the sea is rough.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRIST IS OUR WAY.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.—
John xiv. 6.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus concerning himself, wherein he says, *I am the way*: the way, whither? To the Father. Is there no other way? No, no other way, *no man cometh—but by me*. And what else is he besides the way? *The truth and the life* also. *The truth*, therefore we may safely believe what he says. *The life*, therefore he is worth the seeking after.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our only way to the Father, and besides him there is no other way.

The Father is God. You would all come to God, would you not? especially to God as a Father? Then hearken to me to-day; my errand is to set you in the right way. Abundance of people quite miss their way to God, and so perish in by-ways. There is but one right way, and that is Christ; therefore “kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

I. Show, in what sense Christ is the way to the Father.

II. The properties of Christ as a way; what kind of way he is.

III. What improvement to make of it.

I. In what respects is Christ the way to the Father?

There are seven things which are our concernment with the Father, to which Jesus Christ is the only way.

1. Our acquaintance with the Father. It concerns us all to know God, and be acquainted with him, John xvii. 3. Job xxii. 21. Now there is no being acquainted with God but by Jesus Christ; no being savingly acquainted with him. We may know something of him by the works of creation, but not unto salvation; so, only by Christ, John i. 18. *He hath declared him—*

By what he was, Heb. i. 3.

By word of mouth; he preached concerning him.

By the works he did.

By suffering and dying. It declared him a just, righteous, sin-hating God; therefore, when Philip desired him, John xiv. 8, "Show us the Father," see his answer,—*"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"* v. 9.

2. Our access to the Father. We are coming to him daily in the duties of his worship; are we not? by prayer and supplication, alone, and with our families, in ordinary, in extraordinary, cases. But if we come without Christ, we come out of the right way. *Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father,*" Eph. ii. 18. that is, through his merit and mediation, Eph. iii. 12. Rom. v. 2. By faith in Christ, applying that merit and mediation of his unto ourselves, and appearing in it before God; as Jacob in Esau's clothes.

3. Our acceptance with the Father.

If we come and are not accepted, what the better are we? Paul laboured, "that whether present or absent, he might be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 9. So should we. Now that is only in and through Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 6. This has been proclaimed so by a voice from heaven, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Pleased with our persons: allude to Gen. xliii. 3.

Pleased with our performances: "Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As no sacrifice was accepted, unless offered by a consecrated priest upon the right altar;—so here. Now Christ is both our priest and altar, sanctifying the gift, Heb. iv. 14, 16.

4. Our atonement with the Father. The Father and we are fallen out; he is displeased towards us; how shall we get the quarrel taken up? There is no way but one, and Christ is that way, Eph. ii. 13, 14. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 1. He made peace by the blood of the cross; his death atoned and pacified God's offended justice; made amends for the wrong that we have done him; and we may comfortably plead it, accordingly, as our righteousness.

5. Our adoption by the Father. Adoption is that that makes us the children of God. We are by nature the devil's children, branches in the wild olive, and our fruit is accordingly. Adoption cuts us off from that stock, and grafts us into a better stock, a good olive; puts us into God's family. Now, how is this done? Only by Jesus Christ; he is the way, Gal. iii. 26. Eph. i. 4, 5.

John i. 12. And upon our receiving of him, it is done immediately.

6. The accomplishment of all the promises of the Father. The promises are our great charter; they are both exceedingly numerous and exceedingly precious.

But our Lord Jesus was the way to the making of them; they were made in him, that is, supposing his undertaking. Out of Christ God was a threatening God only, ever after the first promise, Do and live—was slighted.

Also he was the way to the making of them good, 2 Cor. i. 20. If ever we have occasion to put a promise in suit, it must be in his name, in the virtue of his merit and mediation.

7. Our admission into the everlasting kingdom of the Father. To say he is the way to the Father, is as much as to say, he is the way to heaven. Heaven is a place, a city, a city that hath foundations; now every city hath a way to it, and so hath this city—and that way is Christ. There our Father dwells, and keeps court. When we come thither, we shall see him, and enjoy him, only by Jesus Christ.

It was he that purchased it for us, by the merit of his death. We had never had title to it, if he had not so bought it. He is entered as our fore-runner.

It is he that prepares us for it, by his Spirit in the work of sanctification, beginning, carrying on, finishing it, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Col. i. 12, 13. He is our Joshua, both conquering the promised land for us, and dividing it to us, leading us over the Jordan of death.

II. I am to show what kind of a way Christ is. In general, when it is said Christ is a way, it

must needs be that he is so in a singular and peculiar manner, and that his properties, as such, are extraordinary; and so they are, even made up of seeming contradictions.

1. He is both a new way and an old way; as the command of loving one another is both an old command and a new command, 1 John ii. 7, 8. So it is here.

He is the *old way* to the Father, even from the beginning; the way that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, all went; in and through him they were accepted, and justified, and saved, Jer. vi. 16.

He is the *new way*—expressly said to be so, Heb. x. 20. New in respect of clearer discovery and manifestation; held forth before under types and shadows, now laid open; so that he that runs may read. For this new way we are concerned to sing a new song, Ps. xcvi. 1; xcvi. 1, 2.

2. He is both a dead way and a living way.

Dead: all other ways are dead things, and therefore he must die, and so he did, upon a tree, or else he could not have been our way to God. If by dying he had not paid the ransom, undergone the penalty, there could have been no peace for sinners.

Living: he that was dead is alive again, and lives for evermore. In Heb. x. 20. he is called a *living way*—as here—and *the life*. If he were not living, and the life, he could not be a way for us to the Father. It was his rising again that was our justification, Rom. iv. 25.

3. He is both a broad way and a narrow way.

A *narrow way*, Matt. vii. 14. We cannot walk in it, and have elbow-room for our lusts. The strictness of the divine precepts is the hedge

compassing this way about, both on the right hand and on the left, which must not be transgressed and leaped over by those that intend Christ for their way to the Father, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

A broad way—in respect of the true spiritual Christian liberty, which they have that walk in it. The same that is our way is our freedom, John viii. 36. Ps. cxix. 45. 2 Cor. iii. 17. There is no liberty to sin or to do what we list, but liberty as opposed to bondage through slavish fear, Rom. viii. 15, 16. In this sense he is our way to the Father.

4. He is both a high way, and a low way.

A high-way, in the sense of Prov. xv. 24. *above* to the wise. They that walk in Christ, walk in a way out of sight to the carnal world; a way out of their ken, they know it not, nor what belongs to it. Also in the sense of Isa. xxxv. 8. the high way is the ready way, the next way; so is Christ to the Father. Also in the sense of Ps. lxxviii. 18. because he himself is on high, at the right hand of the Father, far above principalities.

A low way, because he so humbled himself as he did, that he might be the way trodden under foot of men; and because they must humble themselves, and be meek and lowly in heart, that will walk in it: denying ourselves our own righteousness and merit, Luke ix. 23.

5. A rough and rugged way, and yet a plain and smooth way.

Rough and rugged, in respect of the stones of stumbling and rocks of offence that are in it, to them that perish, 1 Cor. i. 23. "Unto the Jews a stumbling-block"—That he that could not save himself from being hanged, should save us from

being damned—that by his stripes we should be healed. His death is our life.

Smooth and plain to him that believeth, 1 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Such, though fools, shall not err therein, Isa. xxxv. 8. “Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth,” Prov. xiv. 6. to be sure the knowledge of Christ and him crucified, is so to every believer.

6. A persecuted way, and yet a sweet and pleasant way.

A persecuted way, both with hand and tongue—a sect every where spoken against, Acts xxviii. 22. That sect was the Christian sect, the followers of the Lord Jesus; every where spoken against. Aye, and besides this, they that walk in it meet with many a cross of God’s laying in the course of his providence, Matt. vii. 14. “Strait is the gate, and narrow—affliction—is the way, which leadeth unto life.”

Yet it is a *pleasant way* notwithstanding, Prov. iii. 17. The way of justification by faith in Christ is certainly so, beyond any other way, so sweet, so comfortable to the enlightened soul; no other is comparable to it. The way of holiness also, and new obedience—carries its own reward with it, Ps. xix. 11.—in the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12.

7. It is a way beset with enemies on every hand, and yet secure and safe to them that walk in it.

Beset with enemies. Those are, the devil, and the world, and the flesh; all against Christ as our way to the Father, all seeking to way-lay us, and to turn us aside into by-paths, 1 Pet. 5, 8.

Yet *secure and safe* to them that walk in it; their heels may be tripped up, and they may

stumble and fall, but they shall not be utterly cast down, Ps. xxxvii. 24. *for the Lord* upholdeth him with his hand. See 1 Pet. i. 5. "Kept by the power of God." If divine power be not sufficient for our preservation, what is ?

8. An open way, and yet an enclosed way.

Enclosed in the decree and counsel of God, which is secret and unknown. There is a remnant only according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. Matt. xx. 10.—few chosen.

Yet *open* in the proclamation of the gospel ; as a fountain open, Zech. xiii. 1. Whosoever will may come, freely, Isa. lv. 1, 2. So come ye to this way ; come and welcome. It is not a way shut up from any of you, one or other.

9. A beaten way, and yet but few walking in it.

But *few* at one time, and in one place ; here and there a traveller.

But *beaten* by the multitudes that have been in all ages, and are, and shall be, as will appear, when they shall all come together, Rev. vii. 9.

III. What improvement are we to make of this ?

If Christ be the way to the Father,

Then, 1. If we are out of Christ, we are out of the way. Suppose a traveller hastening onward were informed, in answer to an inquiry respecting the road, that he was out of the way, how would he be surprised ! especially—if the business were earnest,—if it were drawing towards night,—if the false way were a foul way,—and if the danger were imminent if he went on.—And how culpable would he be, if he had been warned of that danger beforehand and would not heed ; and still

more, if a guide had been offered to lead him in the right way, and he had refused him.

Now this is thy case, sinner. O bethink thyself—it is to the Father thou wouldst go.—If thou get not into Christ, thou wilt never come to him. There is no other way. The way of sottish ignorance is not the way ; nor of sloth, and carelessness, and luke-warmness ; nor of wickedness, and profaneness, swearing, drunkenness ; nor of formal profession, in guilt and hypocrisy ; nor of thy own merit and righteousness ; nor of trusting to the mediation of saints and angels. There is no way but Christ.

2. Exhortation. Then, “as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” *Receive Christ* Jesus the Lord, this day. Ye that never yet received him, close with him as your way to the Father, your only way, renouncing all other ; none but Christ, none but Christ.

Having received him *walk in him*.

Walk in his life and example, as your copy to write after, 1 John ii. 6.

Walk in his death, as your comfort and joy, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Walk in his name, merit, and mediation, in his righteousness and strength, in every thing wherein you have to do with God, living and dying. If he be thus your way, he will be your life too.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRIST IS OUR ENSIGN.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. Isa. xi. 10.

By this root of Jesse here spoken of, is certainly meant our Lord Jesus Christ, who came, according to the flesh, from Jesse, the father of David.

It may be objected, It should then be said of him rather that he was a branch of Jesse, than the root of Jesse.

I reply, he was a branch of Jesse as man, but as God he was the root of Jesse; as David, Ps. cx. 1. compare Matt. xxii. 45.

Or thus: The family of Jesse was like a tree cut down and worn out, and in process of time, from one of his roots *in a dry ground*, Isa. liii. 2. that is, from Mary the virgin, a poor woman of the meaner sort, came one strangely and unexpectedly, and that was Jesus Christ the man, the branch, and he is the ensign here promised. And *in that day*, namely, the famous day of the gospel so much talked of, *there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

Doct. Jesus Christ is our ensign.

I shall inquire,

I. What an ensign is, and how we are to understand it. And,

II. What kind of ensign Jesus Christ is, and what good lessons we may learn from it.

I. What is an ensign ?

An ensign hath two significations, a standard, and a standard-bearer.

1. A standard, that is, a flag or banner, such as both horse and foot companies of soldiers have, each company one.

2. A standard-bearer. We call him that carries that flag, the ensign of the company. Now here it is taken not for the person, the standard-bearer, but for the thing, the standard, because it is said, to *it* shall the Gentiles seek ; and yet, to show that the same that is the ensign, or standard, or flag, or banner, that is, the thing, is also the ensign-bearer, the standard-bearer, the person, it follows, *and his rest shall be glorious*.

II. What kind of ensign is Christ.

This ensign is an ensign extraordinary, such as is not to be found elsewhere ; a none-such ensign. And so you will say when I have laid before you these ten properties which it hath : and in the opening of each property, I will show you what the particular duty is which it calls for from us.

1. He is a military flag or ensign ; a banner of war. We call the coats of arms which noblemen and gentlemen give for the distinction of families in times of peace, *insignia*, ensigns : but such an ensign Jesus Christ is not ; he is an ensign for war, a soldier's ensign. Elsewhere he is said to be given for a *leader*, and a *commander to the people*, Isa. lv. 4. He is called the *captain of our salvation*, Heb. ii. 10. here, *the ensign*.

This teaches us that Christianity is a warfare, and that Christ and Christians are warriors; he the captain, and the ensign, and they the soldiers.

But who are the enemies, and what is the quarrel?

The enemies are, the devil, and the world, and the flesh. The cause we are in is the glory of God: remember this, as many of you as are baptized, you are the enlisted soldiers of the Lord Jesus, and look to it that ye be good soldiers, prepared for hardness, 2 Tim. ii. 3. fighting under him not only as your captain, but as your banner. He himself is your banner. We are every day, upon one occasion or other, engaged with one temptation or other; now what do we do? Do we yield, suffer ourselves to be overcome, led captive? Is that like a good soldier? Or, do we resist and fight it out in the strength of God's grace, standing fast in the way of our duty, keeping our integrity, whatever it costs us? This is like a good soldier, Heb. xii. 4.

2. He is a movable ensign. Ensigns, flags, or standards, march from place to place, from one town to another, as there is occasion, at the appointment of the captain. Now Christ our ensign, is Christ held forth in the preaching of the gospel; where the gospel is preached, there Christ the ensign is. He is said here to stand, in respect of his abiding a Saviour, Heb. xiii. 8. Yet he moves as an ensign. And who knows not what removes the preaching of the gospel is subject to; how it is for a time in a place, and then after a while gone again, and another place hath it that had it not before. This was signified by the Old Testament tabernacle, which was a movable tent,

made to be suddenly taken down, and set up again, and carried hither and thither. "Lord, who shall dwell in *thy tabernacle*," Ps. xv. 1. that is, thy church on earth. It was awhile at Shiloh, then at Gibeon, then at Jerusalem. What is our duty then? To make a good use of it while we have it, John xii. 35, 36. Some people bid the ensign be gone, as the Gadarenes did.

3. He is a gathering ensign. The design and end of an ensign is to gather together all that either are enlisted soldiers, or have a mind to be under such or such a captain. Now, in the preaching of the gospel, Christ, by his ministers, proclaims, Ho, every one that will be on my side against sin and the devil, come to me, whether Jews or Gentiles, come, come; as here, *to it shall the Gentiles come*: "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth," v. 12. See the prophecy of good old Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. And of Isaiah, *ch.* lvi. 8.

There is a gathering together to Christ, which is to come, 2 Thess. ii. 1.

There is a gathering to Christ, which is present. Now, now it is our duty to gather to him; till we do so our condition is sad and perilous. We are the devil's soldiers fighting the devil's battles. Away to me, saith Christ. Now what says thy soul? shall the call be an effectual call? It is as much as I can remember forty-nine or fifty years ago, to hear talk of the king* setting up his standard, that is, his ensign, at Nottingham, after that at Shrewsbury; the language whereof was, All that will fight for me against the parliament

* Charles I.

come hither,—for my prerogative against their privilege,—and multitudes came. That is the use of a standard or ensign. Now the Lord Jesus, I say, in like manner, invites you all to come to him, and to fight for him, as Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. Lord, whoever will not, I will. Let thy soul thus answer. Our gathering to Christ freely and willingly must be not only as soldiers, to their standard—but,

(1.) As sheep to their shepherd. He is the good and great Shepherd. Are we joined to him? Do we follow him? John x. 28. Cant. i. 7, 8.

(2.) As doves to their windows, Isa. lx. 8. If they once get to their windows they know they are safe there. Return unto thy rest,—Ps. cxvi. 7.—to thy Noah,—as the dove, Gen. ix.

(3.) As the children to the father. Children, to be sure *good* children, love to be where their father is,—to be taught, and instructed, and employed by him; so should we, 1 John i. 3.

(4.) As the eagles to the carcass, Matt. xxiv. 28. for food. It is strange how far off sometimes they will reach the scent of a carcass. So here,—Where Christ is powerfully preached, and comfortably exhibited in holy ordinances, there, O my soul, saith the lively Christian, will I resort. “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways

of them: Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," Ps. lxxxiv. 1—10. 'This is the right gathering of churches, to gather souls to Jesus Christ, to fight under his banner.

(5.) As the chickens to the hen, Matt. xxiii. 37.

4. He is a guiding ensign. 'The use of the flag is to show the soldiers which way to march: the way that the ensign goes they must go. Our Lord Jesus, as our ensign, is our guide to go in and out before us, Isa. lv. 4. a *leader*: and but for this leader how oft should we be at a loss; as the Israelites in the wilderness, but for the cloud and fire.

He leads us by his word and Spirit; his word outwardly, as the rule; his Spirit inwardly, as the principle, Isa. lix. 21.

He leads us also by his pattern and example, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Matt. xi. 29. John xiii. 13, 14. Now inquire, I beseech you, is it your daily care, every day, in every thing, to walk after this guide? Is Christ your guide to the ale-house, to be drunk there? Are you following him as your flag, when you are going into wicked company? I know you will say no; then how are ye his soldiers?

5. He is an unseen ensign. I mean, unseen with bodily eyes, wherein he differs from other

ensigns. They are visible things ; but by an eye of faith we see him, we behold him, Heb. xi. 27. This looks like a contradiction, but it is not, 1 Pet. i. 8.

6. He is an uniting ensign. It is by the flag that belongs to the company, as much as by any thing, that all the soldiers in that company, being gathered together, are knit together into one. That is their centre of unity ; not only their having but one captain, and being engaged in one cause, and their taking one and the same oath, but having the same flag. So our great centre of unity is our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as our one captain, but as our ensign. We all profess to be one in him—O that we were so ! “There is one body, and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,” Eph. iv. 4, 5, &c. How many ones are there mentioned, and amongst the rest one baptism, that is, one sacramental oath ; and *one Lord*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the uniting ensign. Some plead to have the pope the centre of unity, so that all that do not unite in him must be out of the way of salvation. Others are for episcopacy and the common prayer. As heretofore, one for Paul, Apollos, Cephas ; but I am, said Paul, for Christ, 1 Cor. i. 12. Where it seems to me, I of Christ, are Paul’s words concerning himself ; owning Christ, and no creature, as his centre of unity :

(1.) Because of *v.* 13. *Is Christ divided?* As if he had said, Are there many Christs ? being all one in him, why not with one another ?

(2.) Because of *ch.* iii. 4. “While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are we not carnal?”—where he leaves out those that

say, I am of Christ, from among them that are carnal.—When I say, we ought all to unite in Christ, I mean, that all that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, and walk answerable to that profession, ought to be thought meet for our communion in all the ordinances, without laying down other terms of our own devising, Gal. iii. 28. He united Jew and Gentile by this one ensign, Eph. ii. and it is a shame if others will not be united by him.—His prayer is, “I pray for them also, which shall believe on me,—that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one,” John xvii. 20—22. And the same should be ours also.

7. He is an exalted ensign. Ensigns used to be so lifted up on high, to be seen afar off, and they are seen, accordingly, above the heads of all the soldiers. It is a custom also to choose the tallest, properest men to carry the colours, that they may help the more to lift them up. Now the blessed Jesus is such an ensign; lifted up three ways:

(1.) In the kind of death which he died, even the death of the cross, John xii. 32, 33. As the brazen serpent upon the pole, Numb. xxi. compare John iii. 14, 15.

(2.) In his resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. There he sits, higher by the head and shoulders than all the people, in personal excellences and perfection, Cant. v. 10.—the standard-bearer.

(3.) In the preaching of the gospel—that is the

pole. The great work of ministers is to lift up Christ to people, to set him forth as the most eligible and desirable, both upon the account of what he is in himself, and what he is to poor sinners. They are the friends of the bridegroom, wooing for him, not for themselves; and will ye be won by them?

8. He is an exposed ensign. Of all the officers and soldiers in the troop or company, he is most aimed at that carries the colours; kill him, and the flag falls; and when the flag falls they are all discouraged, and their hearts fail; therefore, "Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel." And is it not in like manner with the blessed Jesus? When he was here upon earth, what attempts were there, both by the devil and wicked men, by all means to destroy him; his person, even as soon as he was born, by Herod—afterwards, in the wilderness—afterwards, to break his neck. And at last they did prevail to get him hanged on a tree; and then they thought their work was done, but it proved otherwise. After his going to heaven, when himself was gone to heaven, what opposition was made against the spreading of his doctrine, against his disciples and followers, especially his under standard-bearers, his deputy ensigns, the preachers of the everlasting gospel. See 1 Cor. iv. 11—13. And still, even at this day, what striking at him in all his offices,—Prophet, Priest, King. Now certainly it is every one's duty to do all that ever he can towards the securing of the flag. (At Edge-hill* the king's standard was taken, and the standard-bearer killed; afterwards retaken.)

* A. D. 1642. Oct. 23. Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, Lib. 1. Part 1 p. 43. Hume, v. 7. 310.

Alas ! what can we do ? I answer, What we can in our particular place and station. We can own it as our chief interest, and act accordingly ; contributing our utmost endeavours towards keeping the flag up, as Aaron and Hur supporting Moses, who held forth the rod of God, Ex. xvii.

. 9. He is a covering ensign. As all the soldiers are concerned in the safety of the flag, so the flag is a means of the safety of all the soldiers, Cant. ii. 4. *His banner over me was love*;—by clinging close to it, unbroken, they are preserved. Our Lord Jesus is promised to his church under this notion, as a covering, Isa. iv. 5, 6 ; xxxii. 2. He will hide all that are his—in the hollow of his hand—under the shadow of his wings—in his secret place ; to signify that he hath more ways than one of doing it.

10. He is a conquering ensign. In the account of victories always the number is given in, how many ensigns killed, how many colours taken ; by that they judge. Now here is an ensign that lives for ever ; a flag that cannot be taken. He always hath been, is, and will be, Jesus the conqueror, Rev. xix. 11. compare Rev. vi. 2. But what are his conquests to us ? See Rom. viii. 37. We are told of a vision that Constantine had, the first Christian emperor, of a banner with a bloody cross on it, with this motto, “ Conquer by this,” which gave him great encouragement in his wars with heathen opposers.* In our late wars, one prayed to know which side should get the better, for on that side he would be.

Use 1. By way of inquiry. What think ye of

* Eusebius de Vit. Const. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. v. 1. p. 263 &c. Milner's Church Hist. v. 2. p. 41, 42.

Christ. How like ye this brave ensign? Are ye listed under it? Whom are ye for?

2. By way of exhortation. Be persuaded this day to give in your names to him afresh, as your own act and deed, to be his, Ps. xx. 5. Having done so, keep close to him.



CHAPTER XX.

CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE.

For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. John xiii. 15.

THERE were two great ends of the coming of our Lord Jesus in the flesh.

The one, that by dying he might satisfy God's justice for our sins, and so make peace.

The other, that by living he may set before us an example.

Particularly in this chapter we have him with a basin of water and a towel, washing and wiping his disciples' feet. If you say, What an unbecoming thing was that, and why should he do so? he himself answers in the text, *I have given you an example.* I did it to show you, how you should stoop and condescend in offices of love one to another; *for if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

Doctr. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our example.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What need we have of an example.

III. What kind of example he is.

IV. What lessons and what duty are to be learned from it.

I. How are we to understand this, our example?

.When I say the Lord Jesus Christ is our example, I mean three things :

1. He is the copy we are to write after ; as children, when they are to learn to write, have copies set them. It is not enough to tell them thus and thus you must do, but show them how, by making the letters, and setting them before them. So our Lord Jesus hath set us a copy. Mark how I have done, says he, and look that ye do likewise.

2. He is the pattern or sampler we are to work by ; as girls when they begin to sew have samplers ; as Moses when to rear the tabernacle, had a pattern of God's own making. *See thou do every thing according to the pattern showed thee in the mount*, Ex. xxv. 9, 40. So our Lord Jesus, that we might be sure to do all things well, himself became our pattern, our sampler.

3. He is the way we are to walk in, and his are the footsteps we are to tread in, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Where he hath trod before us, there we may safely tread. There are the footsteps of the flock, Cant. i. 8. which we are to go forth by. And there are the footsteps of the shepherd of the flock, that is, Jesus Christ, which we are carefully to tread in, and as far as we tread in those footsteps, wherein he hath trod before us, we are in no danger of missing. It is when we tread in other footsteps that we go astray.

II. What need have we of an example ?

We have need of an example upon two accounts ; as of a righteousness for justification, a fountain for washing, a foundation to build on, a refuge to fly to ; so of a copy, pattern, example, to write, to work, to walk by.

We need it—because of our own debility, and—because of our work's difficulty.

If the work to be done be difficult work, and the person to do it be weak and infirm, and unskilful, and apt to miss it, then by all means let him have an example to help him, to go before him ; besides a rule, let him have an example.

Now that is our case.

Is not the work we have to do hard and difficult ? A God to glorify, a soul to save, duty to be performed, temptation to be resisted, affliction to be borne, relations to be filled up ;—is this easy ! Is repenting work easy ?

Are not we, the doers, weak and infirm, bent to backslide, unskilful in the word of righteousness, not only backward to, but awkward in, every thing that is good ? And have we not then great need of an example, one to go before us, to show us how, and which way ?—Our heavenly Father, who knows our frame, hath provided for us accordingly ; the whole Bible is a book of rules and examples, rules in the precepts, examples in the stories ; both Old Testament and New ; which are all to help our infirmities, and we should make use of them accordingly. But one example there, is so in a special and peculiar manner ; a pattern which in a special manner we are to take heed to ; and that is, the blessed Jesus, whose properties are to be shown,

III. By considering what kind of example Jesus Christ is.

1. He is a good example. There are bad examples, and good examples. Bad examples there are enow, which we must not follow ; good examples but a few ; yet some. Aye, but one we have, eminent above all the rest, and that is, the blessed Jesus. He was good, and he did good, and he went about doing good ; and all to set us a copy, that we might learn both to be good, and to do good, and to go about doing good. Ps. xxxvii. 3, 27. There is the precept,—do as your Master hath done before you ; there is the pattern,—imitate him.

2. He is a great example. Dr. Jeremy Taylor,* who wrote the history of his life, according to the four gospels, titles his book the Great Exemplar ; and certainly he was, and is so.

The examples we have of other good men, even the best of them, in comparison with him, were but little examples, small copies ; but he is a copy in text letters.—The reason is, they were but little folks in comparison with him ; they but candles, at best but stars, he the sun. Now as the sun exceeds and excels all other lights, so the blessed Jesus all other examples. There was never one of them all but would yield to him, as John the Baptist did, John iii. 30.

3. He is a general example, the example of examples ; all others learned of him, he of none.

But I mean general in two respects :

(1.) He is an example to all persons. We are all to learn of him, and to do as he did, and to walk as he walked. But will one and the same copy serve every one to write after ? Yes, here is a copy that will.

But there are many of us that are in such con-

* Bishop of Down and Connor. He died, A. D. 1667.

ditions and relations as he was never in ; we are women, he a man ; we husbands, wives, parents, children, tradesmen, husbandmen : how can he then be a pattern to us ?

I reply, though he never was, nor could be, all and every thing of that which we are, yet, however, be we what we will, his example will reach us, if not directly, yet by consequence, as the word is a general rule.—He carried it so and so, and in all that he was, in every relation, and in every condition, and by parity of reason, if we carry it in like manner in our particular conditions and relations as he did in all his, soberly, righteously, godly, it cannot but be well. He had a spouse—see, Eph. v. 25.

But not general, it is objected, for he was not an example to Old Testament people.

Very true, and therein we have the pre-eminence ; yea, and all now have it not—but he is *general to us*.

(2.) He is an example in all things. Other good men are patterns of good, one in one thing, another in another. Abraham in believing, Job in patience, Moses in meekness ; but no one in every thing : Jesus Christ only is such. “ Let us walk honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying : but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” Rom. xiii. 13, 14. It should be—and put on sobriety, chastity, charity ; no, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, which includes all.

4. He is a public, evident example ; set forth to be seen of all. Not a candle lighted and put under the bed, or under a bushel, but upon the table, in a candlestick. Many godly people, men and

women, live and die in obscurity ; some are published, as in Clarke's Lives. We have the story of what he did written at large in the Bible, and of the two we might better spare all the rest of the stories of Scripture, than the one story of the life and death of Jesus Christ, because he is our great exemplar. Lose him and we lose all ; therefore, I beseech you, prize that part of your Bible, in a special manner, that tells you what Christ did, and how he carried it.

We have ministers also, who upon all occasions, either do, or should, explain the great example to us ; showing us what he did, and how he carried it, to the end we may receive instruction by it.

5. He is a plain, easy example. There is a great deal of difference in writing between one hand and another. Some hands are so full of cuts and flourishes, that it is hard for a learner to learn to write after them. Others again so plain, and easy, and free from such appurtenances, that there is little difficulty in copying them.—Now such a hand was that which Jesus Christ wrote, I mean, such a copy, such an example. The condition he put on was a mean, plain condition ; a servant, not a knight, or a lord, or a prince. Now as his condition was, such his example was. He set a copy for poor people to write after ; the meanest cannot say, it is out of my reach, Matt. xi. 29. Learn of me—What to do ? to make the world, to raise the dead, rebuke the winds and waves ? No : to be *meek and lowly* ; as here, to wash one another's feet : not to build churches, or erect hospitals ; not to fast forty days and forty nights ; not to go barefoot on pilgrimage to Jerusa-

lem, not to wallow naked in the snow, as Saint Francis.*

6. He is a perfect, exact example, a copy without a blot : there never was any other so but himself only ; all the rest missed it in one kind or other, nay, missed it in that very thing wherein they were most exemplary,—Abraham in unbelief, Job in impatience, Moses in passion, Peter in cowardice. The reason was, though they were good men, yet they were men compassed with infirmity, but here is one who had no infirmity, Heb. vii. 28. He was holy, harmless. See his challenge, “ Which of you convinceth me of sin ! ” John viii. 46. O how well is it for us, and what cause have we to be thankful, that we have one sinless, spotless example, one that we can safely trust in and follow without fear of erring !

7. He is a purposely designed example. Designed by *God the Father* from all eternity to be so, and that was one reason why the contrivance was that he should be a man like one of us ; not only that in his death he might be a propitiation, the same nature that sinned satisfying ; but also, that in his life he might be a pattern ; a man to men. Designed *by himself* all along, in all that he said or did ; he spake so and acted so that he might—Matt. iv. 19.—that is, I must be an example.

8. He is a peculiarly blessed example. I mean, blessed of God for good to those that apply themselves to work and walk according to it. There is a blessing that attends endeavours in reference to other good examples that are before us, but

* The founder of the order of Monks called Franciscan. He died A. D. 1226. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. v. 3. 56, &c.

especially this. And many a poor soul hath found it so of a truth, found strength coming in from the Spirit of God, enabling him to do that in pursuing the example of the blessed Jesus, which otherwise he could not have done. “Wherefore seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud”—smoothing the way,—“of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

9. He is a perpetually abiding example, Heb. xiii. 8. Other copies of good men are worn out with time; we know little of them now, except some few Scripture patterns. But here is one that will last to the world’s end, Matt. xx. 20. *I am with you*—as a copy for you to write after, as well as to support and bless you.

IV. What is to be learnt from this subject?

1. Then, hence we learn who is a true Christian.

There are Christians in name, such we all are, and there are Christians in reality. Who are they? Those that walk as Christ walked; that make him their pattern and sampler; that can say with Paul, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,” Phil. i. 21. A Christian! and not conform to Christ, to his image, to live as he lived? It is a contradiction, as for a man to call himself a Lutheran, a Calvinist, and not hold with Luther, or Calvin;—an Aristotelian, a Pythagorean, a Platonist, and yet oppose their schemes. It is our badge as Christ’s sheep to follow him; “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

2. We learn who are the best Christians amongst Christians.

It is certain some are better than others. Now,

who are the best ? I answer, they who walk most like Jesus Christ, that tread most closely in his steps : allusion to 2 Kings xiv. 3. " He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father : he did according to all things as Joash his father did." David was the sampler, the standard,—so is the Son of David.

3. Learn how far we are to follow all other examples, how good, how great soever ;—no further than they follow Christ's example ; when they leave him, we must leave them, 1 Cor. xi. 1. The reason is, he is the great exemplar, the pattern of patterns, Heb. xii. 1, 2. In sitting at the sacrament they are on a safer side than those that kneel, because Christ sat ;—though that does not prove we must, it proves we may.

4. Then let us in every thing set ourselves to do as he hath done before us, " He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked ;" 1 John ii. 6. *ought*—not may, if he will, or may choose, but *ought*.—It is duty. Think you hear him say, *Learn of me*, or as Gideon, " Look on me, and do likewise," Judg. vii. 17. Whom should children learn of but their father ? servants, but their master ? Whom should sheep follow but their shepherd ? It were a good thought in a doubtful matter, What would Jesus Christ do if he were here ? how would he carry it ? Would he play at dice or cards, revel, be wanton ?

Wherein especially are we to imitate the holy Redeemer ?

(1.) In his care to please God in every thing, John viii. 29. Did he so ? then let us endeavour the same, Acts ix. 6.

(2.) In his contempt of this world, and every

thing in it. What poor nothings were they to him. Are they so to us,—riches, honours, pleasures?

(3.) In his charity towards all men. He had a love of pity and compassion towards enemies, prayed for them; so should we. But his special love was for the excellent; so should ours be, Eph. v. 2.

(4.) In his carriage under his sufferings and at his death, so meek, so lamb-like, so silent, so submissive—such should ours be.

But is it possible we should be as he was, and do as he did?

I reply, it is not in the same degree, but yet as a child learning to write strives, and doth as well as he can, and eyes his copy often, we may do.

There are two motives to such endeavours.

It will be an evidence that we are his now in the kingdom of grace. And,

It will be an earnest that we shall follow him hereafter in the kingdom of glory, Rev. xiv. 4, 5.



CHAPTER XXI.

CHRIST IS THE DOOR.

I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. John x. 9.

OF all the comparisons made use of by our Lord Jesus to illustrate and set forth what he is ap-

pointed of God to be to true believers, there is none more seemingly uncouth and unlikely, and yet none wherein he is more express and positive, than this, of a *door*,—*I am the door*. He says elsewhere, *I am the way*, and *I am the vine*; and here, *I am the door*.

DOCT. That Jesus Christ is *the door*.

Show, I. Of what use a door is, that we may see and be convinced that we have need of him, as a door.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a door, and what kind of door he is.

III. What improvement is to be made of it.

Lord, give me a door of utterance, and the people, while I am speaking, a door of entrance. Amen.

I. Of what use is a door, and how is Jesus useful as such?

A door we all know is of a four-fold use, or for four purposes—to let out, and let in; to shut out, and to shut in; and so is Jesus Christ, and therefore it is not amiss here that he says, *I am the door*.

1. A door is to let those out of the house that are in it, and have a desire or occasion to go out. It is not to break the walls down, nor to creep out by the window. No, the door is made for the purpose of orderly going out.

Now there are four houses or places which it concerns us all to get out of, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the door by which we must get out if ever we mean to get out.

(1.) There is the prison house of a sinful state and condition. In this we all are by nature, one as well as another, Gal. iii. 22.—shut up under

lock and key, as prisoners are shut up, either for debt, or as malefactors.

In this prison there are two rooms, one is God's, and the other is the devil's.

God's room in this prison, is that in which we are all shut up by reason of the guilt of sin, according to his law, exposing us to wrath and punishment. Consider sin as a debt; we are prisoners for that debt; as a fault, a trespass, a treason. We are prisoners for it, I say, prisoners already, though suffered to walk up and down, yet prisoners—bound over. There is a worse prison to come, but this is the way to it, the beginning of sorrows. Now is there never a door out of this prison, no way to pay the debt, to make satisfaction to divine justice, that we may be discharged? Yes there is, and Christ is that door; whosoever believes in him, shall not come into condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Thus it is prophesied of him, Isa. lxi. 1. "He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." By him many a poor prisoner hath been set free, Ps. cxvi. 16. 1 Tim. i. 13—15. Methinks we should all be glad of this, both those that are out, and those that may get out if they will. Were such an offer made to the poor prisoners in Chester, or Shrewsbury, or Ludgate, or Newgate, the debtors' end, or the malefactors' end, how welcome would it be!

The devil's room in this prison, is that in which all unconverted sinners are; under the dominion of sin, under the power of a corrupt nature; led captive by him, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Like Samson with his eyes out, grinding in the Philistines' mill, and the Philistines making sport with him. Here is the truth of thy condition, sinner

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 4. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience : among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 2, 3. Now is there no door out ? Must I live and die in this condition ? Is there no escaping ? Yes : there is a door ; he is raised up, and sent of God, on purpose to be the deliverer ; as Moses out of Egypt, Cyrus out of Babylon. Dost thou not hear him call ? Thou hast heard it many a time, but not heeded it. O heed it this day, and close with it ; say not, I like my master, and I will not go free, but yield thyself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13.

(2.) There is the house of bondage under the ceremonial law ; an uncomfortable house to dwell in ; the fathers thought it so ; a yoke, an intolerable yoke. But is there no door ? Yes, Jesus Christ is the door ; by him the gospel church is called to go out, from bondage to freedom, from carnal to spiritual ordinances, Matt. xi. 28. And yet there are some that will not stir, nay, are angry with those that do, and hate and persecute them ; as Ishmael the son of the bond-woman, did Isaac, the son of the free-woman, Gal. iv.

(3.) There is the house of correction under afflicting providences. And this is a house that

few of us but one time or other are taking a turn in it, and glad would we be to get out ;—the sick to be well ; in pain to be at ease ; they that are in want to be supplied ; the sad to be comforted. Some cannot abide in this house, but will break prison, use unlawful means to get out. There is but one door of lawful escape, and that is Jesus Christ : he is the door, Ps. lxxviii. 20. Make him thy friend, and let him alone. How ? Humble thyself to him, accept of the punishment of thy iniquity, justify God, judge thyself, bear patiently his fatherly chastisement, use lawful means, and yet be willing to continue his prisoner : and mark if this be not the right door. Murmuring, quarrelling, complaining, shifting, will not do, Job xxxiii. 19 ; xxiii. 24, 25.—there must be a turn-key, a door-keeper, *ch.* xxxvi. 8—12.

(4.) There is the house of the grave : a house in which we must all make our bed shortly ; a dark, silent, lonesome house, wherein there is company enough, but no converse. Is there any door out of this house ? Only one comfortable door, and that is Jesus Christ. “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” John xi. 25.—the *resurrection* only to them that believe, and to all them ; others must be raised, but Jesus Christ is the resurrection only to true believers. None but they must come out through him, as the door. There is *victory* only through him, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

2. A door is to let those in that are without, being open, we go in at it, and it is the right and usual way of entering. Now, such a door for such a purpose is Jesus Christ.

(1.) He is the door into the pasture. So, in

the context, he compares believing souls to a flock of sheep, and himself to their shepherd. Now sheep must have some pasture, some place to graze in ; that place must have some gate or door, for the sheep to go in at. I am the door, says he. What, and the shepherd too ? Yes, and the shepherd too. What is the pasture then, to which he is the door ? The pasture for believing souls is the word of God, the ordinances of God, preaching, praying, singing psalms, sacraments, sabbaths : here Christ feeds his flock, Cant. i. 7, 8. And brave *green* pastures they are, Ps. xxiii. 2, 3. Now the door is Christ ; it is by him we enter, in his name, by the assistance of his Spirit. Without him there is no blessing, no nourishment. How do the sacraments become profitable ? By the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit. See then that we come in his name, and strength.

(2.) He is the door into the presence-chamber, Eph. ii. 13, 18 ; iii. 12. There is no coming to God with comfort, but in at this door. It was his great end in dying, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18.

(3.) He is the door into the storehouse, or treasury, of all the good things that we have need of, whether concerning this life, or the other. The door to them was shut and locked up, and barred and bolted, by the fall. There is no coming at any of them till the Son of God came, and himself became the door. “ My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, *by Christ Jesus.*”—They are laid up in the promises ; now Christ is the door to the promises, 2 Cor. i. 20. Col. i. 19. compare John i. 16.

(4.) He is the door into the school-house. The

church of God in this world is like a great school, wherein all true believers are scholars, or learners. The teacher is God, John vi. 44. His ushers are the ministers, the under-teachers. The lesson is, the will of God concerning our salvation. The door or entrance into this school, is Christ; by him it is we are admitted into this privilege; he gives us the understanding, 1 John v. 20. Ps. cxix. 130.—the entrance or door.—O beg of him to help thee in at this door, to take thee under his blessed tuition.

(5.) He is the door into the ark; I mean, Noah's ark, the close ship, wherein Noah and his family were saved. It had a *door*, Gen. vi. 16. Now that door is Christ; there is no safety, no salvation, but in, and by, and through his merit, and mediation, 1 Pet. iii. 21.—he who enters by Him shall be saved.

(6.) He is the door into the atonement. It is by him that we are let into the pardon-office; into a state of peace and reconciliation with God, Rom. v. 1. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

(7.) He is the door into grace and holiness; his blood is not justifying only, but sanctifying. It is by him that we are made new creatures, partakers of the divine nature; quickened, Eph. ii. 1.

(8.) He is the door into glory and happiness. He is the door into heaven. There is no coming thither, but by him. He is our forerunner.

3. A door is to shut out those that are without, to keep people from coming in at pleasure. They must knock that will enter. Our hearts have a door, and it is shut against him, and he is fain to knock, and call, Ps. xxiv. 7, 9. Cant. v. 2. Rev. iii. 20. These houses of his afore-mentioned have a door also, and they are kept by that door from

being common. But if we knock, it shall be opened, Matt. vii. 7, 8. Provided we knock in time, else the door will be shut, Matt. xxv. 10, 11. Luke xiii. 26—28. And provided also we knock in earnest, Luke xiii. 24. not coldly, carelessly ; not in guile and hypocrisy.

4. A door is to shut those in that are within. All that are let in by Christ into those blessed rooms before mentioned, let him alone to secure them there. John x. 28. 1 Pet. i. 5. When Noah was in the ark, God shut him in.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a door?

As a door he hath these properties.

1. He is a living door. This is peculiar to him. No other door is so besides him ; as he is the *living way*, Heb. x. so he is the living door. The door to life, and a door that hath life. Other doors are dead things. Now, it is true he was dead, but he is alive, and lives for evermore, and thence it follows, Rev. i. 18. *and have the keys of hell and of death.*

2. He is a low door. They that will enter in by him must stoop, or else there is no entering. It was man's pride, lifting up himself against God, that shut up the old door ; therefore it is humility, and humiliation, and self-denial, that must help us in at this new door, Luke ix. 23.

3. He is a strait door, Matt. vii. 14. As we must stoop, so we must strip ; there is no taking our lusts and sins in with us at this door. Away with them, allude to Mark x. 50. He, casting away his garments, rose, and came to Jesus. See Matt. xix. 23, 24. A cable untwisted may, in time, be gotten through a needle's eye, but not else.

4. He is a strong door. The door into the

temple was so, when twenty men were employed night and morning to shut and open it. We read of brazen gates. Such a gate Christ is, and it was needful he should be so,

For comfort to his people. Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost; therefore there is no danger of being broken open, or plucked out. And,

For terror to others. Therefore no breaking in upon him, otherwise than upon his own terms.

5. He is an open door. I may say so in the sense in which he is an open fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. free to all, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. He excludes none from coming in at this door, that do not exclude themselves.

6. He is the only door. Besides him there is no other. I am the door, *that* door, that one only door, Acts iv. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Our own merit and righteousness is no door; therefore said Paul, "What things were gain to me, them I counted loss for Christ: yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," Phil. iii. 7, 8.

The mediation of saints and angels is not. They themselves have need of Christ to be their door.

General mercy is not; it never yet pardoned one sin, nor saved one soul, but in and by Jesus Christ.

Ministers are not, nor ordinances.

III. What improvement is to be made of this subject.

1. What cause have we to bless God that there is such a door, especially that in love to our souls he hath revealed it to us! Yet, more especially,

that he hath helped us in by it ; that it is shut upon us for our security, and not against us for our exclusion.

2. What a condition are they in that are either in darkness, or blindness, knowing nothing of this door, like the Sodomites, Gen. xviii. Or, that are shutting it against themselves by unbelief ; or that are knocking at other wrong doors, like the priests of Baal, 1 Kings xviii.

3. Of what concernment is it to us, every one of us, both to own Jesus Christ as the only door, and to get in by him, and to do it quickly, before the door be shut.



CHAPTER XXII.

CHRIST IS AS THE DEW.

I will be as the dew unto Israel. Hosea xiv. 5.

THESE words are a gracious promise made to Israel by the God of Israel, wherein the thing promised is, that he will be *as the dew* to them. You know what the dew is. It is a moisture distilled from heaven upon the earth, in a summer's morning, whereby the earth is refreshed in a dry season, and the grass, and the corn, and the herbs are refreshed, and made to grow. Now to this little inconsiderable thing, the Lord doth here compare himself, that is, God in Christ, for out of Christ God is not a dew to us, but a consuming

fire ; and, therefore, I say in Christ, and therefore to him I shall apply it.

Doct. That the Lord Jesus Christ is as the dew unto his Israel.

This comparison of the dew is made use of for illustration in sundry places of Scripture.

The inconstant goodness of an hypocrite or dissembler in religion, is compared to the *morning cloud*, and the *early dew*, Hos. vi. 4. The morning cloud promising rain, the early dew performing something towards it, but nothing to purpose ; as good never a whit as never the better. So in the case of the hypocrite.

The multitudes of sincere converts that should be, and were, in the days of the gospel, especially at the first setting of it out, are compared to the multitude of the drops of dew in a morning, Ps. cx. 3. *the dew of thy youth*, that is, multitudes of young converts.

The benefits that the world hath from the presence of good people in it, especially when they are much made of ; they are like the dew to the places where they live, Micah v. 7.

The excellency of brotherly love and unity, and unanimity among brethren, is like the dew, Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 3. It makes every thing to grow, and flourish, and prosper.

The word of God, especially the word of the gospel, is like dew, Deut. xxxii. 2. Isa. lv. 10, 11. Heb. vi. 7, 8.

Here the Lord himself says, *I will be as the dew* to Israel.

Show, I. What likeness there is between Jesus Christ and the dew.

II. Who the *Israel* is to whom he will be as the dew.

III. When especially it is that we have need of this dew.

IV. What our duty is in reference to it.

I. What likeness is there between Jesus Christ and the dew?

The dew hath six properties, all fitly applicable, without straining, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The dew is divine and heaven-born. It is not of the earth earthy, but of heaven heavenly. God himself is the *Father* of it, not man, Job xxxviii. 28. It is often called *the dew of heaven*, Gen. xxvii. 28, 39. Dan. iv. 15; xxxiii. 5. 21. And is not Christ so? Is not God his Father? Was he not begotten of him before all worlds? Isa. liii. 1. *Who shall declare his generation?* He is the dew certainly, for he came from heaven; he is the *gift* of God.

2. The dew descends, comes down. The motion of the sun is circular,* in a round, from east to west; but the motion of the dew and the rain is perpendicular, in a direct line downwards; and both for the good of man. Jesus Christ descended: he ascended, it is true, but first he descended into the lower parts of the earth, Eph. iv. 9. And it was a descent indeed, if ever there was any,—from the right hand of the Majesty of heaven to be born of a poor woman, in a stable, laid in a manger; to condescend to be made man was much, but to be made sin, a curse, was much more.

3. The manner of the descending of the dew is observable; it descends silently, makes no noise, as the rain oftentimes doth, clattering upon the

* That is, *apparently* so, except upon its own axis. It is now pretty generally agreed that the earth and other planets move around the sun.

houses. Such was the coming of this dew, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world ; he came not *with observation*, Luke xvii. 20. *with outward* show, did not cry, Matt. xii. 19.—not after the manner of kings and great men, sending harbingers before them. When he comes upon the soul, either in a way of sanctification, or of consolation, it is silently ; there is no noise ;—the friend that sits on the same seat knows nothing of it, scarce the soul itself at present, Cant. vi. 12.

4. It is the nature of the dew to soften as far as it goes. So doth Jesus Christ : he finds the heart hard, incapable of divine impressions, but he doth not leave it so. He turns the stone into flesh. That is more than dew ever did, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. By this we may know if this dew hath ever descended upon our souls. What softness, pliability, tractableness to the will of God, under ordinances, under providences, is there ?

5. The dew moistens. So doth Christ. The heart, through sin, is not hard only, but dry, till grace comes, and that opens a spring, which spring springs up in the soul to everlasting life ; then there is weeping and mourning for sin ; our own sins, Zech. xii. 10. and other men's sins, Ps. cxix. 136. Ahab's repentance was in some things beyond Josiah's, but Josiah wept ; so did not Ahab ; compare 1 Kings xxi. 27. with 2 Kings xxii. 19. It is said of Gideon's fleece, it was wet with dew when all was dry round about it, Judg. vi. 37. So it is oftentimes with souls in ordinances, under providences.

6. The dew makes fruitful ; the grass, and the corn, and the herbs, and plants in the garden, and in the field, grow the better after the early dew : it is refreshing to them, and causes them to thrive

and shoot forth, Gen. ii. 4—6. Says Elijah, when he would foretell a famine, as the means of it, “There shall not be dew these years.” Says David, in his elegy upon the death of Jonathan, when he would wish the mountains where he died barren, *Let there be no dew*, 2 Sam. i. 21.

The author of all the fruitfulness of souls is the blessed Jesus, by the working of his Spirit and grace. Isa. xlv. 4. See what follows here, *He shall grow*, that is, with all kinds of growth; downwards, upwards; in strength, comfort, usefulness. Hos. xiv. 8. “From me is thy fruit found.” See John xv. 1—5. Mal. iv. 2. As a sun he furthers fruitfulness and growth: “*grow as calves of the stall.*”

II. Who the Israel is to whom he will be as the dew.

There is a two-fold Israel spoken of.

Israel the person. That was Jacob; so called from his prevailing with God in his wrestling. Of him it is not meant. He was dead and gone long before. And,

Israel the people. This is two-fold:

Israel according to the flesh. The nation and the people of the Jews; the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a truth with reference to them, The Lord was unto them as the dew,—refreshing, cheering, comforting, making them to grow, and increase wonderfully. And,

Israel according to the spirit. All truly penitent believing people, whether under the Old Testament, or under the New. Such as are described doing according to rules given, Hos. xiv. 1—4. To such as these Christ is as the dew. It is true he must descend on us, ere we can be such, but when his grace hath made us such, then he is in-

deed the dew unto us. Now when it is said here "I will be as the dew unto Israel," understand it

1. Of the gospel church in general; and the particular churches and congregations, the visible members of it. The Lord Jesus hath been, is, and will be, as the dew to them; making them to grow, and thrive, and increase, and bring forth.

2. Of particular believing souls; such as are Israelites indeed, princes with God; called, and chosen, and faithful. They will all witness for him—I am sure I have found him as the dew to me many a time. And so have I, will another say.

III. When especially have we need of this dew?

1. To be sure we have all need of it while we are in an unconverted state and condition. Till a shower of this dew falls upon thee, thou art good for nothing. God hath no service, no fruit, from thee. Thou art like the mountains of Gilboa, under God's wrath and curse. O that thou wert made sensible of it, that thy soul might be like the dry and thirsty ground, that gapes for the dew and for the rain; that thou wert set a longing after it; crying and calling for it.

2. When the conscience is parched at any time with the sense of guilt staring thee in the face, through some wilful omission, or commission. O then for a shower of this dew! What is there else that can give ease and comfort, but only this? 1 John i. 7; ii. 1, 2. Rom. v. 1. He alone is our city of refuge, the altar we must fly to.

3. Under the withdrawals of the light of God's countenance. When he is pleased to hide his face from the soul, whether provoked to it, or for trial, when mourning all the day long, this alone must be the dew that must refresh and comfort,

Prov. xiv. 12. A beam of that favour shining upon the soul through Jesus Christ.

4. When a fit of barrenness prevails; through the stirrings of some corruption, the success of some temptation, or through the want of quickening means and ordinances, the word, sacraments, sabbaths, solemn assemblies. What hath the soul to recover itself by out of this ill frame? Nothing but a shower of this dew. When he that hath said here, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," comes by his Holy Spirit, puts in his hand by the hole of the door, speaks life and quickening to the soul, that makes a speedy change, as Cant. v. 2, 4, &c.

5. In a time of outward trouble and calamity; when creature comforts fail, relations are unkind, or, it may be, snatched away; when losses and crosses betide us, and our life is made uncomfortable to us;—O the help that is had then, at such a time and in such a case, from a shower of this dew! To be able to say, My Christ is mine still, and I am his. I have my fountain, though my cisterns be all drawn dry, Hab. iii. 17, 18. As David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

6. When we come to die. The valley of the shadow of death is a very low place, so low that it is oftentimes very dark and uncomfortable to those that walk in it; but if the Lord Jesus be with us in that valley we need not fear, Ps. xxiii.

4. One shower of the dews of his refreshing, comforting Spirit, whispering peace, enabling us to look beyond, will make death to be quite another thing, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

7. When we go to an ordinance. The dew is necessary to prepare the ground for the plough.

8. When we have been at an ordinance. It is needful to close the soil with the seed.

IV. What is our duty in reference to this ?

1. Mix faith with it, as a divine truth, that there is certainly such a thing as this dew, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is it. We see and feel the other dew, and know by experience what it is, but this is spiritual and invisible ; yet it is as real a thing as the other.

2. Be more and more sensible of your need of it every day, in every thing ; to soften, to moisten, to make fruitful. All is nothing without it. Nothing else will do the work but it only, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

3. Ask it of God ; and having asked it, expect and wait for it, in the use of appointed means. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain," Zech. x. 1. Say, "Lord, I want a shower of dew for my soul : my plants, my graces, my comforts, wither and decline ; my fruit fails ; help, Lord !"—And for means ; the ordinances are the way.—We must lie by the pool-side. Though they can do nothing without him, though he can refresh without them, yet his ordinary way is in and by them. Wait as the husbandman, James v. 7. Allude to 1 Kings xviii. 4.

But I can do nothing, says one, I am unworthy.

What doth the ground do to invite the dew ? It thirsts, and desires, and gapes, that is all. What worthiness is there in the earth to deserve such refreshments from heaven ? None at all ; the manna, that is, Christ, came down in the dew—in the ordinances, to be gathered only in the morning. Look to it you that are young, it is the *early* dew ; it is dried up at noon ; there are

no showers of it then ; therefore, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth."

4. Observe whence all your spiritual refreshments come, and all your fruit. It is from Christ as your dew ; and let him have the glory of it, Ps. cxv. 1. 1 Tim. i. 12.



CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRIST IS OUR SUN.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. Mal. iv. 2.

THIS sun here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ. It must be he. It can be no other.

He is *the Sun of righteousness*. That is,

He is most righteous in himself ; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, as the Branch of righteousness, Jer. xxxiii. 15. Righteous as God ; righteous as man, *Jesus Christ the righteous*. So he is called, 1 John ii. 1. He is a Sun for righteousness, transcending all other. Besides,

He is *made righteousness to us*, 1 Cor. i. 30. The *Lord Jehovah, our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. So that if ye have any thing to do at any time with the righteous God, any sin to get pardoned, service accepted, and are sensible ye have

no righteousness of your own, take his, and go in his name, and your work is done.

He is also a *rising* sun. There is a two-fold rising of this sun ;

The one general and universal to all the world : at his incarnation, when the day-star, that is, the sun, from on high, visited us, Luke i. 78.

The other particular and personal, in our horizon ; and that is, when we are savingly converted. Then he rises, and never till then, to our souls ; *to you that fear my name*. Not that we fear first, and then the Sun rises. No, the *sun* rises first, and puts that fear into your hearts, that is, that repentance, faith, new nature, and then he rises in us, and on us, more and more. Now, the query is, what the soul gets by the rising of this sun. What doth the world get, what do particular creatures get, by the rising of the sun in the firmament every day ? I answer, six things—light—life—heat—healing—furtherance in growth—and furtherance in fruitfulness.—So do the souls of true believers, by the rising of Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, on them ; every day they get spiritual light, life ; and, therefore, if ye ask what kind of Sun Christ is, and what are his properties as such, I answer, He is an enlightening, enlivening, heating, healing sun, furthering our growth—and our fruitfulness. Of the two first we have discoursed before—as our *light and life*.^{*} Of the four last this day.

Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, a soul-heating, soul-warming sun. What heat, what warmth is there in the beams of the sun in the firmament, in a summer's day ! how extensive ! There is nothing hid from the heat thereof, Ps.

^{*} See Chapters IX. and X.

xix. 6. Nay, if it be in the midst of the winter, though, by reason of its distance from us, the rays are weak, and want force, yet how comfortable is it to us, how refreshing, how glad are we of it! And hath Jesus Christ never been in like manner warming, refreshing, comforting to your souls? Have ye never found him a heating sun to you? It is true, there are places where the heat of the sun is such, as not only blackens, but burns. And there are people too, to whom Jesus Christ is a burning, consuming sun; that is, to all the impenitent, unbelieving opposers of his kingdom and gospel, to all that go on still in their wickedness. See in the first of the chapter, a very terrible threatening,—“All the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” But it follows,—“Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings,”—as if he had said—Be not ye afraid; he that will be a lion to others, will be a lamb to you—an oven to others, a sun to you.

Show, I. What need we have of these warming influences from Christ the Sun of righteousness. And,

II. How and in what way Christ the Sun of righteousness, communicates heat and warmth to those that fear his name.

I. What need have we of these warming influences from Christ the Sun of righteousness?

The need we have is, upon the account of the coldness we are subject to, in spiritual things.

Some are key-cold, stone-cold; they have no heat, no warmth at all. How should they? They

are dead, dead in trespasses and sins, altogether void of spiritual life ; and that was once the case of every one of us, and is still the case of every unconverted, unregenerate soul. Till Christ arise upon us, and give us life, we are dead, Eph. ii. 1. When life comes, heat comes.

Even the best, such as are spiritually alive, are subject to their cold fits. The sense and feeling of which, and complaining under it, is a sign there is life, and that it is not the cold of death. Living people are cold, as perhaps some of you are now at this time,* and dead people are cold ; but there is this difference, the dead are always so ; they feel nothing from it.

The causes of this spiritual coldness are,

1. Some inward distemper prevailing in the soul ; some mortified lust striving, which drinks up the spirits. There are spiritual ague-fits, strokes of palsy. The more of the stone in the heart, and the earth in the mind, the cooler it becomes.

2. From the season ; night time and winter time are cooling times. When God withdraws, it is both night and winter with the soul ; and no marvel then if it be cold.

3. From cooling circumstances, such as want of ordinances, engagement with carnal relations. See both in Ps. cxx. 5. “ Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar !” As if he had said—Alas ! how cold am I !

The effects of spiritual coldness are,

1. Inward uneasiness. Warmth is comfortable ; cold is uncomfortable. When this sun was eclipsed and gone, how sad were the disciples !

2. Unfitness for action. When numbness

* January, 1691—2.

seizes the joints, the man can do nothing, Job xxxvii. 7. "He scaleth up the hand of every man." Wonder not if he cannot work.

3. Unaptness to receive impressions by the word and by the rod—as wax when hard and cold. Inquire,

11. How is heat and warmth communicated by Christ to those that fear his name?

In general—it is by his *wings*. The sun, say you, hath no wings. It means his beams. In allusion to the fowls, who not only fly with their wings, but warm and shelter their young with their wings, Matt. xxiii. 37. But,

1. In particular—he is a *warming* Sun to us.

(1.) He is so by the immediate motions and comforts of his Holy Spirit. It is under that notion that he is promised as a *Comforter*, John xiv. 16. Comfort is warming. Also he is promised as fire, Matt. iii. 11. When he sanctifies, he works as fire, which is cleansing; also when he comforts. And,

(2.) He is so by his word and ordinances, though not without the Spirit. They are dead things in themselves; it is the Spirit only that quickens; but the effect is produced when he is pleased to work with them and by them.

The word of Christ hath a warming faculty, Jer. xxiii. 29. Luke xxiv. 32. Have not you yourselves found it so many a time? When you have come cold to it, benumbed, frozen, how strangely, how suddenly, have you been altered, revived, quickened, comforted!

The sacrament of the Lord's supper is a warming, quickening, comforting ordinance,—as food, as physic, a cordial. Allude to 1 Sam. xxx. 11, 12.

Singing of psalms is another warming ordinance, Eph. v. 18, 19. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

(3.) He is so, by good society. The very sight of a good man warms, much more converse with him; and the more inward and intimate the better, Eccl. iv. 11. Not only bad company, but the want of good company, is cooling. Fire is quenched as well by the withdrawing of fuel as by pouring on water. See Acts ii. 41—47.

May I be bold to ask you, How is it with you? What temper are you in? Are you cold? What kind of cold is it—the cold of the living, or the cold of the dead?

My exhortation to you in both cases must be one and the same: Away to Christ the Sun of righteousness. Lay thy soul under his wings, his warm beams, the influences of his Spirit and grace, his word and ordinances.

Beg of him to come and warm thee by them. This is the meaning of David's oft-repeated request, Ps. cxix. for quickening,—quickenings.

Prayers must be seconded with endeavours. Motion begets heat; so does meditation: "While I was musing the fire burned."

When you meet with spiritual warmth at any time, let the Sun of righteousness have the praise. We may lay ourselves under his warming beams; but what do we towards our own warming? Some ministers, some subjects, are more warming than others; but we must use all the means, and that diligently.

2. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a hea-

venly sun, *with healing* in his wings. Our condition is oftentimes not only a cold, starved condition, but a sick and wounded condition. We are sick—of the disease of natural corruption. We are sick—of the wounds of actual sin.

We should be greatly concerned, each of us, about these two. If any thing ails the body, if that be sick, if that be sore, we send hither and send thither, far and near, for help. What ! and no concernedness for the poor soul ? We should in this case be more concerned, much more ; for the soul is more precious than the body ; one soul is of more value than a thousand bodies. The soul is the man. If the body be sick and die, it is *but* the body, the soul may do well enough ; but if the *soul* be sick and die, the man is lost. The body may perish alone, but the soul never perishes without the body also perishing with it.

Count upon it, each of you, you have need of healing. If you think not so, you have most need of all, Matt. ix. 12. Have you not a corrupt nature ? Why, that itself is a disease. Are ye not daily trespassing and transgressing ? Your backslidings must be healed, or ye are undone.

Behold I bring you tidings of great joy. There is healing, there is a healer. The Sun of righteousness is risen. Away to him then with all thy sores, with all thy sicknesses.

He cures of the disease of corrupted nature by his renewing grace. When the Spirit sanctifies, he heals. O beg that Spirit of his ! Ps. li. 10.

He cures of the wounds of actual sin by his blood and merit ; as a Sun of righteousness imputing righteousness to us before God, wherein we are made to be accepted. This justifies, ac-

quits, absolves, and so heals. See both together, Ps. ciii. 3.

Consider, (1.) The healing that is with Christ the Sun of righteousness, is the alone healing. There is no other that can cure thee, Acts iv. 12. All other physic and physicians are of no value.

(2.) It is all-healing. There is no disease, no wound, that he cannot cure. Among diseases those that are hereditary are hardest cured. Now sin is such ; but though it be so, he can cure it. Among wounds those that have been longest neglected are hardest cured. Are thine such ? Say not, there is no hope. David lay three quarters of a year under the peril of a neglected wound, yet he did well. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7. As when here on earth no disease was able to stand before him, so it is now. The diseases of the soul submit to his healing touch.

(3.) It is healing at hand. What is there nearer at hand to us, wherever we are, than the sunbeams ? Would they afford a remedy for all sores and sicknesses, who would want it ? Lo, here is a sun that will heal thy soul ; and how near is it ! Away then, each of you, with all the speed imaginable, to this healer. Delays are dangerous. David complains, Ps. xxxviii. 5. "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness."

3. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a growth-furthering sun ; *they shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.*

Go forth—as a sick man when healed goes forth ; walks abroad, after long keeping his bed or chamber ; abroad into the open air, which is refreshing, and comfortable ; abroad, about his

occasions. So the soul, when cured of sin by the Sun of righteousness, then, and not till then, goes forth; that is, begins to live, to live to purpose, to the will and glory of God, to his own happiness and salvation, Ps. cxvi. 16.

And grow up.—Oftentimes after a fit of sickness, when cured, children are observed to grow and shoot forth exceedingly. So it is with the soul, and it is owing to the sun's wings or beams. Nobody doubts the influence the sun hath upon the growth of trees and plants. In winter, when the sun is away they grow not, they scarce live. So it is with trees of righteousness, trees of the Lord's planting. All their growth is owing to Jesus Christ.

Can a tree or plant grow without a root? No. Lo, he is our root.

Can a tree or plant grow without watering? Lo, he is our dew.

Can a tree or plant grow without warmth? Lo, he is a sun to us, his warm beams make us to grow, and nothing else will do it without him. Sometimes growth in grace is spoken of as a commanded duty, 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 1. In the text and elsewhere it is spoken of as a promised mercy, Prov. iv. 18. Job xvii. 9. And the blessed Jesus is the sole author of it.

As calves of the stall.—It shall be a speedy, useful growth. It is true he promotes and furthers it by appointed means, Ps. xcii. 12, 13. But still He himself is the author of it.

Let us examine how it is with us. Do we grow, grow in knowledge, grow in grace? Are we better, better this year than the last, more humble, watchful, tender? It should be so. Growth evidences truth;—painted trees grow not. Many

grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13. Growth will appear in strength, and in steadfastness.

Let me exhort and instruct you. Would you grow? Get under the wings of this sun. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18.—How in grace? By growing in the knowledge of Christ; not head-knowledge, but heart-knowledge. After so much preaching of Christ God will certainly expect you should grow apace. "Grow up into him," Eph. iv. 15.—into acquaintance with him, into living upon him, especially as a Sun of righteousness healing us.

4. The same is also to be said concerning our fruit; our Lord Jesus is a fruit-furthering sun.

The summer time, when the sun is with us, is the fruit-bearing time of the year. So when Christ is near the soul, and the soul is under his influences, then it bears fruit. "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. From me is thy fruit found," Hos. xiv. 5—8. See John xv. 1—8. "I am the vine," &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHRIST IS OUR SHIELD.

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield. Gen. xv. 1.

THE Word of the Lord that appeared to Abram, and said this, was the Lord, the Word, the second Person in the blessed Trinity—God the Son ; our Lord Jesus Christ. He appeared often to the fathers in visions before his great appearance, when he was made flesh and dwelt among us. Now that which he said was, *I am thy shield.*

Aye thine, O Abram, says one ; but what is that to us ? what kin are we to Abram ?

I reply, No kin at all, only he was our father ; and is that nothing ? It is true, we are no kin to him according to the flesh, only as he and we are come of the same Adam and Eve. But, according to the Spirit,—he is our father, and we are his children, if we are true believers. He is called the father of the faithful, Rom. iv. All that was said to him was said to us. See Gen. xvii. 7. *A God to thee, and to THY SEED.*

Doctr. That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God a *shield* to all true believers.

Thy shield ? each faithful soul may hereupon say ; *my* shield, Lord ;—as David, Ps. iii. 3 ; xxviii. 7 ; cxix. 114.

Show, I. The meaning of this ; what a shield is.

II. The properties of this shield ; what kind of shield Jesus Christ is. And,

III. What use is to be made of it.

I. What is a shield ?

A shield is the same with a buckler, a broad plate of gold, or brass, or steel, or such like, carried by soldiers in their left hand to ward off blows from the head and heart, while the right hand manages the sword. Such a thing God the Word promised Abram here, and us in him, that He would be to him a shield, that is, a defence, a protection, a preservation to keep us from all evil, from all hurts and harms, from every thing that might annoy us.

But are we in danger ? do we stand in need of such a thing ?

Certainly. We do every day, and every night, every hour, and every moment.

1. We are engaged in a warfare ; every Christian is to look upon himself as an enlisted soldier, and as such hath need of shield and buckler ; not only of a sword for offence, but of a shield for defence.

2. Our enemies that fight against us are many, and mighty ; the world, the flesh, and the devil are the three generals, and under each is Gad—behold, a troop cometh. “ We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” Eph. vi. 12. that is, men like ourselves, and yet among such we have enemies, and therefore as to them we have need of a shield. *After these things*, after the war of four kings with five, after Abram had rescued Lot, and made them all his enemies, no doubt he was afraid. Now the Lord Jesus comes to him, *Fear not*, they shall none of them hurt thee. I will stand between thee and danger. Nay we have another

enemy, I had like to have said, worse than all the rest, considered as an enemy; and that is God, the mighty and terrible God : a professed enemy to every wicked man, going on still in his trespasses. If thou have not a shield to defend thee from him, from the stroke of his offended justice, thou art undone. Now that shield is our Lord Jesus Christ ; not only to defend us from men and devils, but from being hurt by God himself.

3. It concerns us to get a shield, considering what it is that is in danger ; even our all ; all we are, and all we have, our life, health, estate, families ; nay, more than all these ; our souls, our precious and immortal souls, are in danger. They are in danger of being wounded, of being destroyed. Their purity, their peace, is in danger. O then see, see, I beseech you, the daily need you are in of some shield, nay, any shield will not serve—of *this* shield.

II. What are the properties of this shield ?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a living shield. Other shields are dead things, made of dead materials ; but he lives, and lives for ever. He was dead, it is true, but he is alive again, and lives for evermore.

2. He is a lasting shield. Other shields are subject to be worn out in process of time with much using, and then new ones must be had. Solomon made golden ones. In his son's days, they were gone, and brazen ones made in the stead of them ; but here is a shield the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; Heb. xiii. 8. It is a long time since Abram and David had him for a shield, yet he is as firm and good now as ever, as safe and as sure.

3. He is an encompassing shield. Other shields

are for one side only, but here is a shield for every side—right side, left side, inside, outside, Ps. v. 12. It is said concerning Job, and though the devil said it, he said truth, “Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?” Job i. 10.—a hedge about, and about, and round about, never a gap in it.—Were there one open place, at that one evil might come in.

4. He is an impenetrable shield, such a shield as cannot be pierced through. We are told of a buckler, or shield, that was seven-fold, the thickness of seven ox-hides. What sword, or spear, or dart, could pierce that shield? Lo, here is one beyond that, armour of proof, such a shield as nothing can prevail against, nothing can enter. Is it a thing possible to prevail by power against omnipotency?

5. He is the alone shield, besides him there is no other. Solomon, and the rest of the kings, had choice; if one failed, they had another—for variety. But this never fails; there is no need of any other; it alone is sufficient. Other shields are shields of no value, such as cannot do our business, neither of one kind nor other; none but Christ, none but Christ.

Are not, it is asked, magistrates shields? Ps. xlviii. 9.

They are sub-shields, under-shields; He alone is the chief shield. They can do nothing without him; he can do what he pleases without them. But,

Is not faith a shield? Eph. vi. 16. “Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

It is not faith that quenches in itself, and of

itself, but as it receives Christ, and holds up Christ. Every shield must have a hand to hold it, so must this shield. Now that hand is faith, —not love, not repentance, not patience; but faith.

6. He is an all-sufficient shield.

He is a shield to all them that *put their trust in him*. If there were more such than there are, he would be enough for each of them; but not to others, Prov. xxx. 5. Ps. xxxi. 19. It concerns every one then to make sure his interest in Christ. If Christless, shieldless.

He is so at all times, and in all cases; against all enemies, bodily, spiritual; in all perils and dangers, to the inward, to the outward man, Gen. xvii. 1. Being God all-sufficient, he is a shield all-sufficient.

III. What use are we to make of this?

1. This is a very comfortable truth to all the Lord's people—that Jesus Christ is a sun to enlighten and warm us, that he is a shield also to protect and defend us. Let our condition be never so pleasant and delightful, if we be not safe in it, if exposed to perils and dangers by enemies, what the better are we?

It may comfort us,

(1.) In reference to public concerns. We should be of a public spirit, that is, disposed to rejoice in any truth we hear (as many are in news told) that is for the good of God's people in general. Now such is this, the Lord Jesus Christ is his church's shield.

He is a shield to the universal church, visible and invisible—to protect and defend it from all its enemies, within and without, open and secret, Matt. xvi. 18. To his being so to it all along, we

owe the continuance of the being of it in the world to this day. The power and policy of hell and earth have not been wanting to undermine and destroy it, but our Shield defends it.

Now it is his tabernacle. Moses' tabernacle was secured from wind and weather, with a covering of rams' skins, and badgers' skins. So Christ is the covering of his church, Isa. iv. 5, 6.

It is his vineyard; and see what care he hath for the preservation of it, night and day, Isa. xxvii. 1—3.

It is his flock and fold; and to preserve it, see what he says, He will be a wall of fire round about.

It is his army, and to secure it he is a shield-general; not only captain-general, and ensign-general, but shield-general, for their protection. Therefore, ye that love Jerusalem, rejoice with her, Ps. cxxv. 1, 2. Her enemies shall not prevail.

He is a shield to particular congregations and assemblies that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, especially that walk worthy of their profession, to protect and defend them against the wrath and violence of those that hate them. Are not we ourselves an instance, amongst many others in like circumstances? Had we been here to-day, if the blessed Jesus had not been a shield to us? Whose hand but his hath been our covering? It is true we have a good law, and a good king and queen,* but had they been for us, if the Lord Jesus had been against us? No, no; he hath been for us, therefore they. "The shields of the earth belong unto God," Ps. xlvii. 9. He that hath undertaken the protection of the whole tabernacle, hath undertaken the protection of

* King William III. and Queen Mary.

every apartment in it. He that hath undertaken the care of the whole vineyard, hath undertaken the care of every bed in it. He that hath undertaken to look after the whole flock, hath undertaken to look after every sheep in it. He that hath the command of the whole army, hath the command of every troop in it. Therefore, to him let us give the glory. Therefore, on him let us still wait.

(2.) In reference to our own particular personal concerns, we have daily need of a shield; and we have one, and shall have him our shield, if we trust in him—even the blessed Jesus.

He is our shield to *secure and safe-guard us from God's wrath and curse due to us for our sins*. Were it not for him stepping between, every day we were undone. The blows falling upon us lighted upon our shield, and bruised him, Isa. liii. 4, 5. He was made a curse for us, died the death for us. O how should we love him!

He is our shield from *the rage and malice of Satan*, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. And who secures us from him, but the blessed Jesus—the lion of the tribe of Judah? He takes our part.

He keeps us from being tempted, preventing us with preventing grace. He was led himself into the wilderness to be tempted; Matt. iv. 1. But he doth not lead us so; and it is a great mercy, and that for which we should be very thankful.

When we are tempted he is our shield to ward off the blow of the temptation, so that it shall not fall so heavy as otherwise it would, 1 Cor. x. 13. Luke xxii. 30, 31. He was tempted, but see Paul's testimony, "He said unto me, My grace is suffi-

cient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9.

He is our shield, to give us victory over the temptation, nay, to make us more than conquerors, that is, triumphers, as Job was. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," 2 Pet. ii. 9. Eph. vi. 16.—*quenching* the fiery darts of the wicked.—

He is our shield from the *violence of wicked men*. God had no sooner withdrawn his shield of protection from Job, but presently the Chaldeans and the Sabeans were upon him. We cannot imagine what our adversaries that hate us would do unto us, not only to our assemblies and meeting places, but to our persons and families, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield, 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

He is our shield from *all the evils and disasters that we are day and night exposed to*; going out, coming in, lying down, rising up. It is true, he makes use of second causes in doing it, but himself is the principal. The angels are of his appointing, Ps. xxxiv. 7 ; xci. 11 ; and cxxi. He strengthens our bars, Ps. cxlvii. 13. He is our shield from sickness. He is the body's shield from falls and bruises. He is the children's shield from burning and scalding, Job i. 10. Say then, how much are we indebted, and what shall we render ?

2. Learn hence what a sad condition they are in, to whom Christ is not a shield. How are they exposed to all the evils and enemies that are against them ! Imagine a man in a field fighting, and no shield, no friend. This is thy condition, sinner. O be sensible of it, and be afraid.

3. By way of exhortation and instruction.

(1.) Make Christ your shield, by a hearty closing with him as such, from a due sight and sense of your absolute need of him, and of the insufficiency of all others, in heaven and earth, to safe-guard and defend you. Renounce them all, and cleave to him. Suppose a paper or paste-board shield were all the defence a man hath in time of battle—how hopeless !

(2.) Having made him your shield, make use of him as your shield, every day, in every thing. Go not out, lie not down, but under the shadow of his wings. Say, as in Ps. xx. 7. “Some trust in chariots and some in horses ; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.” Look up to him for protection.

(3.) Having and using him as your shield, fear not. There is a fear of care and caution, which is our duty, and it is awakening. There is a slavish, weakening fear, which is our sin. How often are we warned against it—as here, “Fear not, I am thy shield.”



CHAPTER XXV.

CHRIST IS OUR STRENGTH.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil. iv. 13.

THIS were a big word of holy Paul, in the former part of this verse—I *can do all things*—unless he had somewhat qualified it by adding, in the

later part of the verse—*through Christ which strengtheneth me. Do all things?* One would hardly think it should be the same man that says elsewhere, *I am nothing, the chiefest of sinners, less than the least of saints.* Each of these sounds like humility, bespeaks him a humble, meek, lowly, self-denying man, such as we all should be; but to say, *I can do all things*, is high and strange. What could be said more even of God himself, Job xlii. 2. But his adding, *through Christ*, gives *him* the glory, even him who is God, blessed for evermore. It is true it is *I* that *do* when I do, but then it is as true, what I do Christ doth in me, Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Then it is he and not I; his *strength*, and not my own.

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the alone strength of true believers, he is made unto us of God—strength.

Not only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, not only sun and shield, but strength also. He doth not only strengthen us, but he is our strength. *The Lord is my strength*—in the same sense in which he is our life. We do not only live in him, and by him, and through him, but he himself is our life, Col. iii. 4. So *we* are not only strong in him, and by him, and through him, but he himself is our strength.

Show, I. What strength this is meant of.

II. What need we have of him to be our strength—wherein.

III. What are the properties of this strength.

IV. How and by what means does he communicate it to us?

V. What special inferences are to be drawn from it, that Jesus Christ is the strength of true believers?

I. Of what strength is this meant?

Strength is two-fold :

1. There is *natural strength*, which is strength of body. Some have very strong bodies in comparison of other ; they are stronger to bear burthens, to endure hardship, to do work. The strongest that ever was was Samson. But that the story of him is a Scripture story, and therefore certainly true, one would hardly believe it, that he should kill a lion ; slay a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass ; carry the city gates, posts and all, on his back ; burst the green withs ; and overturn a house with his two hands, Judges xiv. xv. xvi. The Lord was certainly with him, with him after a peculiar manner, strengthening him, or he could not have done it. He was herein a type of Christ. He is our Samson, Jer. l. 34. Now as to this strength, either we have it, or we have it not. We must be content if we have it ; thankful. We must not by any means be proud of it, Jer. ix. 23, 24. For consider—there are sundry kinds of beasts that have more of it than we. We received it—and a small matter may take it away ; a short fit of sickness.

2. There is *spiritual strength*, which is in the mind and soul ; called strength in *the inner man*, Eph. iii. 16. The one of these may be where the other is not. Samson was strong in body, but weak in mind, else he would not have been deceived by a woman, Prov. vii. 26. Many are weak in the outer man—women are the weaker vessels—who, nevertheless, are of great spiritual strength.

II. What need is there that he should be our strength ?

Those who think they have need of none have

most need of all, as of righteousness, wisdom, washing, physician, so of strength.—That which needs strength is weakness. Now we are none of us weak, are we? All strong, strong to do any thing: we can *do all things*, I warrant. No such matter. We are weak and can do nothing, nothing, nothing truly good, as it ought to be done, further than Christ works it in us. “Without me”—separate from me, not taking me along with you—“ye can do nothing,” John xv. 5. You cannot please God, profit others, save your own souls.

Our weakness is *universal weakness*. We are all over weak. I mean in the inner man; spiritually weak, Isa. i. 6.

We are weak in the head, weak-headed. The head is the upper region of the soul; the apprehending, understanding, remembering, faculty is there. And are these strong or weak with us in spiritual things? Weak, certainly, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Do not ye find it so, in yourselves and others? Luke xiv. 25. Prov. xxx. 3. How dull, how forgetful! Is it not our daily complaint, and yet will we say we have no need of Christ? O see your need of him, and beg of him to give you “an understanding, that ye may know him that is true,” 1 John v. 20. Beg of him to open your understanding, that ye may understand the Scriptures, Luke xxiv. 45. Every time we open the Bible to read, every time we go to hear a sermon, let us say, Lord Jesus, be strength to my understanding, my memory.

2. We are weak in the heart—weak-hearted, Ezek. xvi. 39.

The heart is put for the lower region, the will and the affections. In these, it is true, there is

strength, but it lies the wrong way ; as wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge. We are strong and stiff in choosing evil, and fast in holding it ; in refusing good motions, resisting, gainsaying, loving simplicity, hating knowledge, Prov. i. but as to that which is good, how weak are we to embrace it, and hold it fast ! How weak are we in spiritual combats with sin and Satan ; yielding presently, overcome immediately, easily, at the first onset. What is that but weakness ? Now the Lord Jesus is the strength of our heart, Ps. lxxiii. 26.

3. We are weak in the hands—weak-handed.

The hand is the part that we receive with, if any gift is offered, money, a jewel. Such a hand we must have, or we cannot be saved. Now that hand is faith. And are we strong or weak in believing ? As weak as water ; it is not in us to believe, till the Lord Jesus works it in us ; faith is his gift.—The disciples were of little faith.

The hand is the part that we hold with, when we have received. Suppose a man taking hold of Christ, good hold, justifying hold, saving hold, can he keep that hold by any strength of his own ? No, he cannot, but as Christ is his strength. He is weak.

The hand is what we work with. We have a great deal of work to do for God, for ourselves, for the good of others ; repenting work, obeying work, praying work. And are we not weak in it, not only backward to it, but awkward, unto-ward ? And is not he our strength ? I can *do* all things through Christ, Isa. xxxiii. 2.

4. We are weak in the back and shoulders.

Those are the bearing parts ; and are we strong there ? Can we hold up under a heavy cross, or calamity befalling us ? No, no. We sink, we

droop, we faint, and that is a sign our strength is small, Prov. xxiv. 10. But if the blessed Jesus put to his helping hand, that strengthens, that upholds, Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11. Therefore to him we must go in this case also.

5. We are weak in the feet.

Those are the standing parts, that bear the weight of the body. The shoulders bear other things, but the feet bear them. Now what feet hast thou, what ability to stand? We are often called on to *stand*; *stand therefore*, Eph. vi. But have we strength of our own wherewithal? Do we stand on our own legs? No, certainly, Phil. iv. 1. "Stand fast in the Lord."

Those are the walking parts. And what walking ability have we? The way we are to walk, is in the way of God's commandments, of righteousness, of holiness, of our duty. Alas, how weak! not only weak-sighted, eyes weak, not seeing our way, however not clearly and plainly, but weak-footed; as appears,

(1.) By our aptness to stumble, even at straws. Every little thing offends, and turns us aside.

(2.) By the slowness of our pace. Were it not for weakness, how might we rid ground in our way to heaven.

(3.) By our inability to hold out. We are soon tired; we begin well, but are weary presently.

This weakness is born with us, and is increased through our own default, more and more.

It is growing weakness; old men become weaker and weaker;—and yet we are loth to own it, through pride of heart.

III. What are the properties of this strength?

1. It is divine strength. Less than divine strength, and other than divine strength, will not

do divine work. We had need of the strength of God to take hold, and to wrestle with God, and to walk with God, and to work for God, and, therefore, such is provided for us. "By *his* strength he had power with God," Hos. xii. 3.—not by Jacob's own strength, but Jéhovah's strength. Everlasting arms were under him, enabling him to tug and wrestle with him, as he did. "According to his glorious power," Col. i. 11.—not according to our own shameful weakness. Christ the *power* of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. Therefore, be of good comfort, thou feeble soul ; God and a weak creature can do any thing.

2. It is daily strength, that is, strength that we have need of every day, and strength that is ready for us every day ; "Be thou their arm every morning," Isa. xxxiii. 2. Think of this, when waking every morning.

Three things are to be done every day :

(1.) New temptations are to be resisted ; and how else shall we be able to resist them, but in the strength of Jesus Christ ? Read 1 Sam. xvii.

(2.) New afflictions are to be borne. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it. We are born to trouble, and born again to trouble, but whence are we able to bear it, but in the strength of Christ ? Col. i. 11.

(3.) New duties are to be performed—towards God—towards our neighbours—towards our families—towards ourselves. And whence are we able to do them, but in the strength of Christ ? Christ is our arm in every prayer, in every thanksgiving, in every repenting act, in every believing act. Are we to give reproof, to take reproof ? Strength is needful. So in the affairs of our particular calling.

3. It is inward strength. I mean not only strength in the inward man, in opposition to bodily strength, but strength arising and flowing from an inward principle. A man may be strong to do much, and suffer much, from external weights pulling and drawing, that is, from motives from without—to please men, or gain applause from men, but that is another thing from what is done by an inward principle, grace in the heart, the love of God shed abroad there, the love of Christ constraining, as the bias in the bowl, the spring in a watch. Both of them are out of sight, but both are strong and strengthening. Now inquire, Have ye this principle, can ye witness to such a drawing from within?

4. It is increasing strength. It is said of our Lord himself, that he grew in strength, Luke ii. 52. that is, as man. So do all that are his, Prov. iv. 18. They go from strength to strength, Ps. lxxxiv. 7. Job xvii. 9. Thence it is that true believers who live long are best at last. Other things weaken by age, but grace strengthens by it.

5. It is suitable strength. It is suited

To persons that have it, according as their age, condition, need requires. The little finger hath not the strength of the arm, nor is it needful it should have it. So a private Christian needs not the strength of a magistrate, or minister; nor the child, or the servant, that of the master, or father, in the family. It is suited also

To the work that is to be done with it. All work requires not the same measure of strength for the doing of it; one hath work of one kind, now of another. See Numb. vii. 6—8. “As thy days so shall thy strength be,” Deut. xxxiii. 25.

6. It is sufficient strength, 2 Cor. xii. 9. As for ourselves, we have no sufficiency of our own to any thing that is good. No matter, while there is an all-sufficiency in the grace of Christ. Therefore, fear not that any temptation, affliction, duty, will be too hard for thee, Ps. xxiii. 4.

IV. How is this strength communicated to us?

1. By the immediate influences of his Spirit, Eph. iii. 16. As it is the Spirit that quickens, so it is the Spirit that strengthens. He is the soul of our souls; as all the strength the body hath, it hath from the soul, so all the strength the soul has, is from the Spirit. He works all our works in us, and for us, Isa. xxvi. 12. Our mortifying work, Rom. viii. 13. our repenting work, Zech. xii. 10. our praying work, Rom. viii. 26

2. By the ordinances.

The word is strengthening both read and preached. It strengthens the head in knowledge, the heart in faith, and love, and all obedience.

The sacraments as seals are strengthening: what a help to believing!

3. By good society. Ps. lxxxiv. 7. "They go from strength to strength;" that is, they increase in number, and by that means in strength.

V. What special inferences are to be drawn hence?

1. Learn what is the reason we are so weak, the ground of all our infirmities. We are Christless, Christless.

Some are totally so, therefore, tossed to and fro like children, by errors, by temptation: therefore no work is done for God, or for the soul.

All in part are so; we go forth in our own strength; as Peter, and you know what came of it.

2. Learn what to do that we may be strengthened. Ask it of God in the name of Jesus Christ, Ps. lxxviii. 28. Isa. xxxiii. 2. Every day in every thing.

3. Learn what to do when we have asked and received it. Use it; it is a talent. We can do more than we think we can, through Christ strengthening.

4. Learn what to do when duty is done, especially if well done; give him the glory, Ps. cxv. 1. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10.



CHAPTER XXVI.

CHRIST IS OUR SONG.

The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. Ps. cxviii. 14.

CHRIST, the true treasure, is certainly hid in the field of the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Psalms, yet more particularly in this psalm. Who else but he is the stone refused by the builders, and made the head-stone of the corner? *v.* 22. Who else but he is here spoken of? *v.* 14. *my strength and song?* is it not the same that is become *our salvation?* our Jesus? All true believers may as truly say it in their measure as David,—he is *my song*.

DOCT. That Jesus Christ alone is, and ought to be, the song of all true believers.

Show, I. In what sense we are to understand it.

II. What of Jesus Christ is it that is especially a believer's song.

III. What are the properties of that song which Jesus Christ is to all true believers.

IV. Make the application.

I. In what sense are we to understand this, the Lord is my strength and song?

To be sure, not in that sense in which Job says, "Now am I their song, yea, I am their by-word," Job xxx. 9. Or David—"I was the song of the drunkard," Ps. lxix. 12. It is enough, and too much, that he is so to unbelievers, to them that swear by his blood and wounds, as unholy things, trampling them under their feet. No; "Unto you which believe he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. Believers have other thoughts of him, carry it otherwise towards him; and it is one of their best evidences that they are true believers.

But it is to be understood in a three-fold sense :

1. He is the main object of their hope and trust, and ought to be so. Of this we discoursed before, from 1 Tim. i. 1.* That which is our confidence uses to be our song. If gold be our confidence, gold is our song; if our great friends are our confidence, they are our song; and so every thing else. Now a believer's great, nay only, confidence is the Lord Jesus Christ; his hope is in him, and in no other; no, not in God himself, nor in the mercy of God, nor promises out of Christ. "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation," Isa. xii. 2. Are our sins to be forgiven, our performances to be accepted? His merit and righteousness alone must be our song. We must hope and trust in no other.

* See Chapter VI

2. He is the main subject of their praises and thanksgivings, and ought to be so. We have many occasions to sing, that is, to give thanks, upon account of the many, many mercies and deliverances vouchsafed, both public and personal, Ps. xxxii. 7. Nay, we must sing not of mercy only, but judgment also, Ps. ci. 1. Like the nightingale, even when the thorn is at our breast. But the mercy of mercies that we are to sing of, and to bless God for, is Jesus Christ, the gift of gifts, the unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

3. He is the main matter of their joy and rejoicing, and ought to be so. He is the *head* of their joy, Ps. cxxxvii. 6. He is the *gladness* of their joy, Ps. xliii. 4. We may rejoice in other things: husbands are bid to live joyfully with the wife of their youth, Eccl. ix. We must eat our bread with joy, and rejoice in the labour of our hands; but still Jesus Christ must be our *chief* joy. Our song must be of him, above and beyond them all: and is it so? Can we appeal to God and say, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that it is so? If we can, it is a good sign of the good work wrought in us. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. Mark, no confidence; Jesus Christ alone is our confidence. And where is our joy? Is it not in Christ Jesus? He that rejoices aright in Christ Jesus can find enough in him to rejoice in, in the want of other things, Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Three things are requisite to the making of Jesus Christ our song, that is, the main matter of our joy and rejoicing.

(1.) An interest in him. Not a common in

terest, which all have in him as a common Saviour; but a peculiar interest, a special interest, as *my* Saviour: this must be supposed. Now that which gives this interest is our closing with him by faith; it is believing that makes him ours; that is the foot by which we come to him, the hand by which we receive him, the mouth by which we feed upon him. What is it that makes two one in the conjugal relation, but the mutual assent and consent each to the other? Hos. iii. 3. So it is here.

(2.) The knowledge of that interest. Many have the former that have not this, and that is the reason why many, concerning whom we hope they are truly in Christ Jesus, yet do not rejoice in him as they ought. He is not their song. Their strength he is, to uphold and support them, that they sink not under their doubts and despondences, but their song he is not. The more is the pity that these two should be parted; yet sometimes it is so. *Zion* said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," Isa. xlix. 14. And is it any marvel, when the King of *Zion* himself hath said so, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ps. xxii. 1. It therefore concerns all true believers that have an interest in Christ, to clear up their interest to their own souls, that they may be able to say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his," and, therefore, he is and shall be my song.

(3.) Suitable walking. If we let the reins loose to sin and folly; if we suffer the world and the vanities of it to encroach upon us, and to steal away our thoughts and affections, that will quickly spoil Christ's being our song, Hos. ix. 1. Joy is forbidden fruit to a backslider; such have other

work to do. It is they only that keep conscience void of offence, that walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, that keep close to God and duty, I say, it is they only, that can rejoice in Christ Jesus. And therefore, see to it all ye that desire to make Christ your song, and to rejoice always in him; mind your way; mend your pace; ply your work.

II. What of Christ especially is a believer's song?

True believers sing, and ought to sing,

1. Of what Jesus Christ is in himself as to his personal excellences and perfections. It is usual to make songs, and to sing them by way of encomium, or praising, of worthy men that outshine others. They made songs of Saul, and of his valour; of David also. David himself made a song in praise of Jonathan. And have not we much more cause to make and sing songs of the blessed Jesus? Is there any like him, any in heaven, or on earth, to be compared with him? There is something in him that makes him more admirable than his being a Saviour. What is that? His perfections as God infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, and power. Of these we ought to sing. His name is *Michael*—who is like thee, O Lord! We ought to sing of him as a Saviour, *our* Saviour.—So in the text—and *is become my salvation*. There is no need to make songs to this purpose, there are some made already; read Ps. xlv. The book of Solomon's Song, is an encomium of our Solomon, read *ch. v. 10, &c.*

2. We ought to sing of what he is to us. You have heard in sundry particulars already, and more is yet behind. He is our foundation, our

food, our root, our raiment; and should we not sing of these? Is there not cause?

3. We ought to sing of what he hath done, and is doing, and will yet do, for us.

What he hath done. He hath taken our nature upon him, and in our nature suffered and died; he hath washed us from our sins in his own blood; called us with a holy calling; begun a good work.

What he is doing. Is he not ever living to make intercession for us? Is he not guiding and guarding us, enlightening and comforting us, every day?

What he will do for us. He will perform the good work that he hath begun; he will come again and fetch us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also. Can ye name any other to sing of, that hath done the like for you?

III. What are the properties of this song?

1. He is the angels' song. They were singing songs at the beginning of time, to the praise and glory of God-creator, Job xxxviii. 7. Aye, and they were singing too in the fulness of time, Luke ii. and what was their song? It was to the praise and glory of God-redeemer, Luke ii. 13, 14. Though they could not sing, as we, *Who washed us from our sins*—yet for our sake they sang, *On earth, peace.* Yea, and for their own confirmation also. So that it is no disparagement to be heard singing this song, when the blessed angels themselves sing it. Christ is their song.

2. He is the most ancient song; the song of the ancients. All the Old Testament saints sung of him, and rejoiced in him. Abraham saw his day, and rejoiced; the patriarchs sung of him; the prophets sung of him; Isaiah especially, the

evangelical prophet, read *ch.* v. xii. xxvi. xxvii. and lxiii. only with this difference, they sung of him as one to come, for they saw him, though it was but as through the lattices, or as through a glass darkly.

3. He is the new song. Wherever ye read of a new song in Scripture, it points at him, Ps. xxxiii. 3 ; xl. 3 ; xvi. 1 ; xviii. 1 ; cxlix. 1. He is the New Testament song. Ever since his coming in the flesh all his saints have been singing of him, as of one already come ; rejoicing in him, and showing forth his praises. As fast as they have been made new creatures they have learned this new song.

New, that is, excellent, because when things are new they are at the best.

New, upon the account of new occasion given, a new mercy received.

4. He is their night song, Ps. xlii. 8. Job xxxv. 10.

In the night season, when others are sleeping, true believers are rejoicing in God their Redeemer, and solacing themselves in him, Ps. cxlix. 5. Cant. i. 13. Acts xvi. Paul and Silas sang at midnight.

In the night of sorrow and affliction. To be able to sing then, when every thing looks sad and sorrowful round about us, is a great matter ; as David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

5. He is their song all the week, and their song on the Sabbath. We are bid to rejoice in the Lord always, every day, and they that have an interest in Christ, and know it, do so ; but especially on Sabbath days, Ps. cxviii. 24. Sabbath days are set apart on purpose. Ps. xcii. is en-

titled a Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day, *v.* 1—3.

6. He is their song while they live, and their song when they die. While they live, in all the turns of their lives, *Ps.* cxlvi. 2. And in a special manner when they come to die; upon sick-beds, and death-beds. As it is said of the swan, that she sings sweetest when dying, so it is with many of God's people. At the death of Mr. John Janeway,* one present said, he never was in a room where God in Christ had more praises than there at that time.

7. He is their song in the world, and will be their song to eternity. What is the great employment of heaven, and what will it be for ever and ever, but to lift up God-redeemer, *Rev.* v. 9—13. Jesus Christ is to be our everlasting song, *Isa.* xxxv. 10. It is good to be found doing that now that we would be glad to be found doing hereafter—world without end.

IV. Let us make the application.

1. This may serve for an examining sign, or mark of trial, whereby to know what we are as to our spiritual state and condition. We are bid to try ourselves, *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. The glory of God and our own comfort depend much upon our knowing, or not knowing, of ourselves. Marks are needful for our help herein. Amongst others this; What is Jesus Christ to us? What think we of him? Hath he ever been our song? Do we rejoice in him? Do we not rejoice in other things more than in him? Have not other things more of our thoughts, desires, pursuits, joys? If yea, suspect thyself, and change thy way. Conversion is often spoken of

* A. D. 1667, æt. 23

under the notion of singing, Ps. cxxxviii. 4, 5. Isa. liv. 1. Rom. xv. 9, 10.

Get acquainted with Jesus Christ. The word reveals him to us, but the Spirit reveals him in us. Pray for that Spirit. Be learning Christ daily.

Make him thy own by believing; accept of him; close with him; let all go for him.

Having done this, be often meditating what the blessings and benefits are that are made over to us by him, and through him—justification, adoption, and sanctification—and call them all thy own: Ps. xlviii. 11, 12.

2. Here is a word of reproof to the true believers among us, that do not make Christ their song, that are in him, but do not rejoice in him; however, not with evenness and constancy, not in that measure and degree, that they should and ought. Thou shouldest chide thyself for it, Ps. xlii. and xliii. 5. Consider—

· It grieves the Spirit of God.

It blemishes the ways of God; makes thee a stumbling-block to them that are without, like the evil spies.

It is weakening to thyself. The more Christ is our song the more is our strength, Neh. viii. 10. Then search out the cause.

3. Exhortation, to all that call themselves believers. Make Christ your song, week days and Sabbath days.

He is worthy that you should.

The gain of it will be thy own, in present comfort, in eternal recompense. “Now the Lord of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,” Rom. xv. 13.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHRIST IS OUR HORN

*Blessed be the Lord—for he hath raised up an
HORN of salvation for us. Luke i. 68, 69.*

THESE are the first words of the song of Zacharias, the father of John, wherein he blesses God, not for John, though John was to him a great mercy, being the son of his old age; yea, and a mercy to all Israel, being the prophet of the Highest, and the forerunner of Jesus; but for Jesus, the mercy of mercies, the universal mercy. If you ask wherein?

I answer,—As a Redeemer—*who hath visitea and REDEEMED*—God the Father, by God the Son; not from corporal, but from spiritual slavery. We have cause to bless God every day for a Redeemer. And,

As a horn of salvation.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is raised up of God to be a *horn of salvation* to all true believers.

Show, I. The meaning of this—why a horn, and wherein a horn of salvation. And,

II. What kind of horn of salvation Jesus Christ is—what are the properties of this horn. And,

III. Make the application.

I. I am to explain this—a horn of salvation.

A horn hath many significations in Scripture.

1. There are horns, properly so called, wherewith beasts are armed ; some with two, some, it is said, with one, as the unicorn, which hath its name from having but one horn, Ps. xxii. 20, 21. These horns are not only the beauty of the beast that hath them, but his strength also : with them he pushes, and gores, and tosses to and fro what is in his way ; and it is incredible what the strength of some creatures is in their horns.

2. There are figurative horns.

We read of the *horns of the altar*; to which the beasts were tied that were unruly when they were to be sacrificed, Ps. cxviii. 27.—and to which Joab fled for refuge from the avenger of blood that was in pursuit of him, 1 Kings ii. 28.

The *power of wicked men*, wherewith they vex and oppress their poor neighbours, is called their horn, Ps. lxxv. 4, 5, 10. The godly also have their horns, “ The horns of the righteous shall be exalted,” Ps. lxxv. 10.—that is, I will advance them to honour and power. It is never well with a nation or kingdom but when it is so, Prov. xi. 10. Antiochus,* that bloody enemy of the Old Testament church, the type of the antichrist, is called in Daniel, *the little horn*, Dan. vii. 8, 21.

3. There is the musical horn, to blow with ; either made of a beast’s horn, or of some other materials framed in the likeness of a beast’s horn ; crooked, 1 Chron. xxv. 5. The same are elsewhere called cornets, Ps. xcvi. 5, 6. Dan. iii. 5, 15.

4. There is a vessel called a horn wherein oil was put, when David was anointed king by Samuel, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 13. Saul was anointed with

* Antiochus Epiphanes. king of Syria. He died, B. C. 1650, in the 12th year of his reign, and the 39th of his life.

a *vial* of oil, a small quantity, 1 Sam. x. 1. David was anointed with a *horn*, that is, abundance of oil ; noting the difference that was to be between them—in their gifts for government—and in the duration of their kingdom.

Now which of all these is applicable to Jesus Christ ! I will tell you when I shall first have told you what the salvation is. Salvation is three-fold.

Temporal—from temporal enemies.

Spiritual—from sin, and the world, and the devil.

Eternal—in heaven, from the wrath that is to come. Neither is that all. Salvation of each sort hath more in it than rescue from evil, it includes also the presence and fruition of the contrary good. So that salvation is the main matter. When it is said of Christ that he is *a horn of salvation*, it means—that he is the author and procurer of all good to us, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. It is he also that saves and delivers us from all evil, bodily and ghostly, present and future. Well might Zacharias say, “Blessed be the Lord, for he hath raised up an horn of salvation,” Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20.

A horn of *salvation*, namely, a saving horn. Other horns are destroying horns ; beasts’ horns are so ; the little horn was so. But, lo, here is a saving horn, a horn that hurts nobody but those that stand it out against him, and think to fight it out with him ; them he pushes and gores, and ruins with a witness, Luke xix. 27 ; xx. 18. As for others, he is to them a saving horn, a redeeming horn, a delivering horn.

II. What are the properties of this horn of salvation ?

There are only two properties—according to the two-fold signification of a horn.

He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies plenty. And,

He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies power.

I shall put them together in this proposition :—
There is plenty of powerful salvation in Jesus Christ, by the appointment of the Father, for all true believers, that is, for all that will come to him for it. I shall show,

1. That salvation by Jesus Christ is powerful salvation.

What we translate *a horn of salvation*, is by some rendered *a mighty salvation*. Salvation by Jesus Christ is mighty salvation, Jer. l. 34. *Their Redeemer is strong*. If he were not strong and mighty, yea, almighty, he could be no Redeemer for us, because of the mighty enemies that were, and are, against us; and because of the vigorous opposition they make to hinder our salvation. He that will be the Author of salvation to us must be strong enough to deal,

(1.) With God: for he is against us as sinners. His justice is our enemy, and must be satisfied. And can the blessed Jesus do that for us? is he able? Yes, he is able, in the sense in which we call a rich man an able man; he is able in respect of wealth and riches, to pay all our debts, if they were a thousand times more and greater than they are, not farthings, and pence, and pounds only, but even talents; and therefore, if any be sent to the prison of hell for their debts, it is not for want of a sufficient surety to undertake for them, but for want of accepting of him, Heb. vii. 25. O mix faith with this, and say, If

it be so, why am I thus? His merit is of infinite worth and value.

(2) With Satan. He is the gaoler in whose custody all unregenerate people are. They are his prisoners, his captives, his galley-slaves now, and must be with him for ever. And can the blessed Jesus deal with him? is he hard enough for him? He is certainly; he *hath broken his head*, Gen. iii. 17. He *hath led captivity captive*, Ps. lxxviii. 20.—*made a show of him openly*, Col. ii. vanquished and destroyed him.—We read, in Matt. iv. of a duel which he fought with him,—though upon great advantage on the devil's part, yet he beat him out of the field, which was a pledge, or specimen, or earnest, of his great victory by dying, Heb. ii. 14. It must needs be so. Though the devil have great power, as well as great wrath, Eph. vi. 12. yet his power is but created power. He is a creature still. But our Redeemer is Jehovah. There are two lions; the one—a fallen angel, 1 Pet. v. 8. the other—God blessed for ever, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

It is an act of infinite power to fetch a soul at first out of the devil's clutches—by converting grace, Luke xi. 24.

It is an act of infinite power to preserve us ever after, from being ruined by him.

(3.) With the corrupt nature in us. This is as hard to be dealt with, to be subdued and conquered, as the devil himself. Suppose an impregnable castle defended by a mighty giant, a Goliath; that is the case. There are two wards in this castle, the higher ward, and the lower ward.

The understanding, that is the higher ward; fortified with invincible ignorance, inveterate pre-

judices. These he pulls down, 2 Cor. x. 4. He enlightens the mind, Eph. v. 8. It is strange with what power.

The will, that is the lower ward; stubborn, obstinate; will by no means be persuaded, till the mighty grace of Christ comes, Ps. cx. 3.

(4.) With the malice and power of wicked men, the professed enemies of God's people. Can the blessed Jesus deal with them? Is his horn strong enough for their horns?—Certainly it is, and will be sure to overcome them.

(5.) With death and the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

2. There is plenty of this powerful salvation, enough, and enough again; not a vial, but a horn, of salvation. It is the appointment of the Father that it should be so, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. i. 19. He is all *fulness dwelling*—not for himself, but for us, John i. 16. As the fulness of milk in the mother's breasts, of light in the sun, or the fulness of water in the spring or fountain, which is a flowing fulness, Zech. xiii. 1. "a fountain." Not a vessel or laver, alluding to that wherein the priests were to wash—larger in Solomon's time than it was in Moses' time, though still only a laver; but here is a *fountain*. There is a great deal of difference between a laver and a fountain. Our wants are many and great, and if our supplies be not accordingly, what will become of us?

(1.) We want righteousness wherein to appear before God every day—for the pardon of our sins,—and for the acceptation of our services. Our own will not do. He hath it for us; he hath enough, a horn of righteousness; Dan. ix. 24. *everlasting* righteousness. A spring that cannot

be exhausted, Jer. xxiii. 6. He is Jehovah our righteousness.

(2.) We want wisdom to lead and guide us in all the practical affairs of our souls. How oft are we at a loss for want of it! Lo, here is a horn of wisdom for thee, divine, heavenly wisdom, Col. ii. 3. Not for himself, but for us; not to be laid up, but to be laid out, 1 Cor. i. 30. James i. 5.—he gives *liberally*.

(3.) We want strength; strength to do in doing time; to suffer in suffering time. Our strength is weakness; our sufficiency, insufficiency, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Lo, here is a horn of strength for thee. Not only a strong horn, in itself strong, but a horn of strength for *us*, to make us *strong*. See discourse on Phil. iv. 13.* We can do nothing without Christ, John xv. 5. but all things through Christ.

(4.) We want grace. Some want it altogether—they have none of it. Others, that have it, want more of it, more faith, and more humility, and more meekness, patience, contentment, submission. Lo, here is a horn of grace for thee, a fulness. Wouldst thou have more faith? pray as the apostles, Luke xvii. 5. “Lord, increase our faith.”

(5.) We want peace, that is, comfort in our souls, from the sense of God’s love and favour towards us. Many a one would give all the world, if they had it, for one smile of his face. Lo, here is a horn of peace and comfort for thee in Christ Jesus, John xiv. 27. 2 Pet. i. 2. He is our peace—not only our peace-maker, but our peace-matter. Away to him then by believing.

(6.) We want eternal life; want it indeed, for

we have forfeited it, and are never likely to recover it by any thing we can do. This is salvation—the top-stone. Now there is with Christ a horn of this also, John x. 10.

(7.) We have temporal wants also ; some of one kind, some of another. I put these last because they are the least ; of least consequence in comparison, though we are apt to complain most of them. One wants health ; another wherewithal to pay his debts, and maintain his family, and pay his taxes ; another is struck at by enemies, and wants a friend to stand by him. Lo, here is a horn of supply for thee in all thy wants ; one that hath wherewithal ; for the earth is his, and the fulness thereof, as well as heaven, and the fulness thereof,—“ My God shall supply all your need,” Phil. iv. 19.—it includes temporal needs. When he sent forth his apostles without purse or scrip, at their return he asked them, Lacked ye any thing ? and they said, Nothing, Lord.

III. The application.

1. Let this advance your esteem of the blessed Jesus. Think of him according to what is meet, as a strong, mighty, rich, able Saviour. The pre-eminence is his ; let him have it, Col. i. 18.

2. Let us bless the Lord God of Israel, who hath raised up the horn of salvation for us, laid help upon one that is mighty, Ps. lxxxix. 19. We have cause to be thankful for our temporal salvations by him, but especially for spiritual and eternal salvation. “ Lift up the horn,” 1 Chron. xxv. 5. that is, Christ. They sung the gospel psalms, such as Psalms ii. lxxviii. cx. &c.

3. Let us make sure our interest in this horn by heartily closing with him upon gospel terms,

that we may each of us call him *my* horn, Ps. xviii. 2.

4. Live upon him with all holy joy and cheerfulness, Eccl. ix. 8. There is no room for despair or distrust.

5. Live to him in all holy obedience—care to please, fear to offend—in order to living with him.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHRIST IS OUR HONOUR.

Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

THE DOCTRINE from these words is this, That Jesus Christ is an honour to all true believers.

To be precious to them, and to be an *honour* to them, you say, are two things.

I reply, they are in effect the same. However, to be an honour to them is, I am sure, more agreeable to the original, for what else is the Greek word here, but an honour? See the margin.

Two things I mean by it :

1. He is the Author of honour to them.
2. He is, and ought to be, the object of honour from them. He honours them, and they do, and should, honour him. The latter follows upon the former. The former is to be spoken to as to the

doctrine, the latter as the application by way of inference from it.

Show, I. Wherein, and upon what accounts, Jesus Christ is the Author of honour to all true believers.

II. What kind of honour it is.

III. What we learn from it.

I. How is the Lord Jesus the Author of honour to all true believers ?

We use to say concerning the king, that he is the fountain of honour, that is, all his subjects that are men of honour, derive their honour from him. Others give them honour, but it is he that makes them honourable. Now King Jesus is he, and he alone, that is the fountain of honour to all true believers ; they derive their honour from him.

1. He hath himself an honourable esteem of them. They are persons of honour, even the meanest of them, in his account, Isa. xliii. 4. He finds them, as all the rest of the children of Adam, without honour, even as the beasts that perish by nature, Ps. xlix. 12, 20 :—this is the burthen of that Psalm, but he doth not leave them so. They find favour in his eyes through his own mere mercy and free grace, and then he honours them : he loves them and then honours them. Just as it is with kings oftentimes ; they do not honour men for desert sake but for good pleasure sake ; they will because they will ; and thence many unworthy men are men of honour. So the King of kings. We must say, “ After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared : not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abun-

dantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit. iii. 4—6. We must all say in like manner, *Not by works of righteousness*. It was the dear love he had to them, and the honourable esteem he had of them, that made him do and suffer as he did for their ransom and recovery, Rev. i. 5.—loved and washed ; as John xiii. 1.—loved, and therefore washed their feet with water. He took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. And like a servant, he served that he might honour us. His degrading purchased our honour, Luke xxii. 27. O how should this affect us !

2. His will is, that every one else should be in this like himself, in having an honourable esteem of them. As when the king bestows a degree of honour upon a person, makes him a knight, or a lord, or an earl, he expects others so to regard him ; so it is here. See Esth. vi. 3, 6, 7. They that do not honour the true saints and servants of the God of heaven, do not do as Jesus Christ would have them do, Ps. v. 4. It is made the character of a citizen of Zion, that he honours them that fear the Lord ; *honours* them, hath a high and honourable esteem of them ; how low and mean soever they may be in the world, as to their worldly state and condition. How much soever they may be despised, and scoffed, and scorned at by others, they are the excellent of the earth, in his eye, because they are so in Christ's eye, Ps. xvi. 2.

3. He hath done that for them, which in the account and esteem of men may, and doth, deserve that honour. I do not say, they deserve that he should honour them, I said the contrary before, but that men should honour them, Rom. xiii. 7.—honour to whom honour.

What is it that he hath done for them that may be the ground of men's honouring them?

(1.) One ground of honouring men is upon the account of their personal excellences and endowments; some are honourable for their learning, and knowledge in arts and sciences; some for their wisdom and prudence in the management of secular affairs; in the field, as soldiers; in the senate, as counsellors. Now if so, the people fearing God deserve honour indeed, for they have better knowledge than others. They from the least even to the greatest know God. And whence have they that knowledge, but from Christ, who gives them an understanding? 1 John v. 20. They have wisdom also; another sort of wisdom; wisdom from above in soul affairs: they are wise to discern the times—and whence have they that wisdom, but from Jesus Christ, who is made unto them of God wisdom? 1 Cor. i. 30. They search the Scriptures, and those make them wise; and therefore noble, Acts xvii. 11.

(2.) Upon the account of their great usefulness in their particular places and stations; in court or camp, for peace or war. Doth this deserve honour? Then saints deserve it; for who are more useful than they?

By their prayers: fetching down mercies, keeping off judgments, as Moses.

By their presence: they are chariots and horsemen, the militia of the country: allude to 2 Kings iii. 14.

By their pattern: they are the lights of the world shining amongst men; giving good examples; showing which is the way to heaven, by walking in it. And whence is all this, but from the Spirit of Jesus Christ which is in them and

with them. It is grace that enables them, and therefore he is their honour.

(3.) Upon the account of their honourable relations wherein they stand. He that is himself in honour reflects honour upon all that are related to him. Now what are the relations of true believers?

They are all the children of God; and how, but by faith in Jesus Christ? Gal. iii. 16. John i. 12. And is not that a high honour? We honour the children of great men for their honourable parents' sake; and is there not reason then that we should honour true believers, that are the sons and daughters of God Almighty? They are honourable by birth, not the first, but the second, both by father and mother, Gal. iv. 26. Amongst men some have one that have not the other; but we have both.

To be a servant, even the meanest, to men of honour, carries honour in it. Then believers are honourable, for *they are the King of heaven's servants*, by their own choice and by his acceptance, Ps. cxvi. 16.

Nay; *they are his friends*, admitted to his secrets, acquainted with his counsels, John xv. 15. As Hushai was a friend to David, 2 Sam. xv. 37. Zabud to Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 5. Sir Fulk Grevil had inscribed on his tomb—Servant to Queen Elizabeth, and friend to Sir Philip Sydney.

(4.) Some are made honourable by marriage;—the wife by the husband. Then all true believers are honourable, for they are all, and each of them, espoused to the Lord Jesus, and his honour is their honour, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Read Ps. xlv. which is the nuptial song.

(5.) Some are honourable on account of their

honourable hopes. Young heirs are honoured for their inheritance sake, though as yet under age. Then all true believers ought to be honoured, for they are all heirs, not of an earthly, but a heavenly, inheritance ; heirs of heaven, nay more, heirs of God. God himself is their inheritance, and higher we cannot go, Rom. viii. 17. Their honourable attendants are the angels, Heb. i. 14. nay, the Son himself, Luke xii. 37.

(6.) Some are honourable on account of their honourable offices and employments, Rev. i. 5.—kings and priests ; so he makes them.

(7.) Others are honourable on account of their honourable name, James ii. 7. The word Christian is from Christ : all this honour have all his saints, Ps. cxlix. 9.

II. What kind of honour is it that true believers have from Jesus Christ ? It hath these properties.

1. It is real honour. Other honours are but a shadow, a dream, a fancy. This hath substance in it, Prov. viii. 21. As the riches of a believer are substantial riches, not things that are not, Prov. xxiii. 5.—so the honours of a believer are substantial honours. God doth really and truly honour such ; so doth the blessed Jesus ; so do the angels.

2. It is righteous honour. Other honours which the honourable men of the earth have, are oftentimes unrighteous—unjustly given, and unjustly taken ; when they that have them do not deserve to have them. But here it is deserved ; not, as we said before, at the hands of God—we can merit nothing, but at the hands of men it is, 2 Sam. vi. 22.

3. It is heavenly honour. Other honours are

from below, this is from above ; other honours are upon earthly accounts, this upon heavenly. The birth of a believer is heavenly, his endowments heavenly ; he is heaven-born, and heaven-bred. His inheritance is in heaven hereafter ; his conversation is there now. Therefore if it were asked—Is it from heaven, or of men ? Luke xx. 4. you may answer, as to this honour—From both ; but principally and originally from heaven.

4. It is harmless honour. Other honours often hurt those that have them, puff them up with pride, make them haughty and high-minded, as Haman, but so doth not this. Paul, to whom Christ was more an honour than to any other, was humble. Who was more humble than he, more low and mean in his own eyes ? Eph. iii. 8. 2 Cor. xii. 11.

5. It is unsought honour. What endeavours are there to obtain other honours ; what struggling and striving ; what cringing and courting ; what bribing and waiting. But here it is not so. This honour is truly like our shadow, it follows those that, in the sense of their own unworthiness, fly from it, and it flies from those that, in pride of heart, are ambitious of it, Matt. xx. 20—28. Ezek. xvi. 6.

6. It is unfading honour. It is honour that lasts, it is lasting, everlasting. We have known divers that for a time have been in great honour, upon the very topmost pinnacle of honour, and by and by in disgrace and dishonour, hooted at ; but it is not so here. As he loves to the end, John xiii. 1. so he will honour to the end ; not only to the end of time, but to an endless eternity ; for ever and ever. We shall never fall from this honour.

III. What may we learn from this subject ?

1. We learn what to think of the great and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth. His name, and his Son's name, is certainly, upon this account, to be admired and adored by us, and by all his creatures, angels and men. For what ? For his infinite love and free grace, in condescending in this manner to a remnant of Adam's seed, so as to put all this honour upon them. We have cause to say, as David, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers ; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained : what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! Ps. viii. 1, 3, 4, 9. Or, as the same David elsewhere, with reference to the honour done unto himself, in his advancement to the kingdom, "Who am I, O Lord God ? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto," 2 Sam. vii. 18. Especially may those say so, who themselves are made partakers of this honour, who are received into the family of God, who are made his servants, his friends, his children, though so mean, so vile. Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house ?

2. We learn what to think of those who are not believers ; all the ignorant, careless, carnal, unregenerate generation ; certainly, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are none of those that God will honour. They are all strangers to this dignity and advancement. Would you know what the esteem of God is concerning them ? Look into his word ; see what

that says concerning good men. It says, they are God's jewels, the excellent of the earth, his favourites, his children, the dearly beloved of his soul. But what says it of the wicked? They are chaff, dross, dogs, swine. O then, see that none of you be such; fear, fear lest it be your condition.

3. We learn what is the true way to true honour. It is in our nature to desire it—as to be covetous in desiring wealth, voluptuous in desiring pleasure, so ambitious in desiring honour. But the misery is, we mistake our end, and consequently our way. We take those things to be wealth, and pleasure, and honour, that are not so, and that not to be so which is so; and we pursue accordingly. O be convinced that the way to be honoured, I mean, to have Christ an honour to us, is to believe, that is, to close with him upon gospel terms, Isa. lx. 19.—*thy God thy glory*—Isa. xxviii. 5. John xii. 26. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Ps. xci. 15.

4. We learn what is our duty towards those to whom Christ is an honour. Certainly it is our duty to see them truly honourable, and to love and honour them accordingly. Allude to 2 Kings xx. 12, 13. The Babylonians worshipped the sun, and knowing that for Hezekiah's sake their god had gone back, they sent to do him honour. Let this advance your esteem and enhance your value of good men—that Christ himself does them honour; and, they deserve it at your hands, though not at his.

5. We learn what is their duty to whom Christ is an honour. To make it their business to honour him all they can, all their days; as they

should love him, so they should honour him, 1 John iv. 19.

Why is he to be honoured?

He is worthy that it should be so; truly worthy, as God, as God-man, as our Redeemer and Saviour.

It is the Father's will it should be so, John v. 22, 23. Col. i. 18, 19. Therefore, he has the pre-eminence, because it pleased the Father.

It will be our own benefit and comfort, living and dying. We shall be no losers, but gainers, by it.

Wherein are we to honour him?

In general—let him be precious to you.

Have high and honourable thoughts of him.

Speak high and honourable things concerning him, as Paul did.

Do nothing to displease and dishonour him, but every thing contrary, Phil. i. 2.

Let other things be precious to you, and persons, for their relation sake to him; his word, day, worship, people.

Stand upon your honour; perform promises; do nothing below you.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHRIST IS OUR SANCTIFICATION.

Who of God is made unto us SANCTIFICATION.
1 Cor. i. 30

THESE words themselves are the DOCTRINE—

That Jesus Christ is made unto us of God sanctification.

The word translated sanctification, is most commonly rendered in Scripture *holiness*, Rom. vi. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 15. Heb. xii. 14. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, holiness; he is not only holy in himself, the *holy child* Jesus, Acts iv. 27, 30. nay, *most* holy, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy; but he is *made holiness* to us, that is,

1. He is appointed of God to be the author of our sanctification, to work holiness in us for the making of us holy. As the efficient cause, as he is the Lord our righteousness, to make us righteous by imputation, so he is the Lord our holiness, to make us holy by implantation. We are justified, that is, accepted of as righteous in the sight of God, through his merit made ours. We are sanctified, that is, actually made holy, by his Spirit which is given to us, to abide with us for ever, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, Heb. ii. 11. Now the question is—Are ye

glad to hear this, or no? Every one would be willing to be accepted as righteous, acquitted from guilt, but are you willing to be sanctified, to be made holy?

2. He is the pattern, the sample, the exemplary cause, of our sanctification. Holiness in us is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in the Lord Jesus, John i. 16. As the wax hath line for line from the seal, the child limb for limb, feature for feature, from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ.—To be sanctified is to be made conformable to the image of Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 29. It is to be made like him in heart and life; yet so, as that in three things there is a difference.

He sanctified himself. So do not we. We are sanctified by him, John xvii. 19. As he raised himself to life, so never did any other; but we are raised: it would have been long enough ere we should have made ourselves holy.

He was originally holy, never otherwise, not only as God, but as God-man, Luke i. 35. So are not we. We were unsanctified before we were sanctified, unholy before holy. So was not he.

He is absolutely, universally and completely holy. He had the Spirit poured out upon him without measure. So have not we. Our sanctification at the best in this life, is but imperfect. It is true there is a perfect day to come, and our light shines more and more towards it, but here below we have it not. Our wine is mixed with water; our gold with dross. So was not his.

For further clearing of this I shall show,

I. What sanctification is, or what it is to be sanctified.

II. That we have need of one to be made sanctification to us.

III. That Jesus Christ is made so, and how he sanctifies. And,

IV. What practical inferences are to be drawn from this subject.

I. and II. I shall join the two first together by explaining what sanctification is, and by showing that we need one to be made sanctification to us.

To be sanctified is variously expressed, represented, and set forth, in the Scriptures.

1. It is to be renewed. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, whereby we are *renewed* in the whole man after the image of God, Eph. iv. 22—34. It is the making of us new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is the changing of our very nature. We are by it made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4.—a high expression. Now have we not need of one to do this for us? Can we do it for ourselves, or for one another? We cannot; therefore the great God hath undertaken it for us, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And he doth perform it by Jesus Christ. To him, therefore, we must go.

2. It is to be regenerated, that is, born again, John iii. 3, 5. As sure as there is a first, there is a second, birth. Now, can we beget ourselves? We cannot. The second birth is from above; we are begotten of God, and born of God, 1 Pet. i. 3. John i. 13. Tit. iii. 5, 6.

3. It is to be raised from death to life; to be quickened, Eph. ii. 1. that is, sanctified. Sanctification is the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 6. Now, can a dead man raise himself to life again? Did ever any do it? He cannot. It is God alone

that raises the dead. It is by Christ alone that dead souls are made alive. He is the resurrection and the life.

4. It is to be reconciled to God.—There is enmity, enmity ever since the fall, between God and man; mutual enmity. God an enemy to man, man an enemy to God, Zech. xi. 8. Rom. viii. 7. Now Jesus Christ as Mediator brings them together, and makes them friends, and he alone can do it.

He makes God a friend by dying; his death satisfied, and so pacified. He hath said, In him I am well pleased.

He makes us friends by sanctification, destroying the enmity—not all at once, but by degrees; and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. Is this reconciling work done with you?

5. It is to be converted. Sanctification is the same with conversion. It turns us about. We are born with our backs upon God and heaven, and our faces upon sin and hell, till grace comes, and that converts, turns, Acts iii. 19, 26. And we must be turning more and more all the days of our lives, Matt. xviii. 3. Luke xxii. 32. Now, can we turn ourselves? Have we not need of one to do it for us? Certainly we have, Jer. xxxi. 18. “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.”

6. It is to be called with an effectual call. There is a common call, and there is an effectual call; it is the effectual call that is the same with sanctification, Rom. viii. 30. Now, calling is by another; we do not call ourselves; that other is Christ, 2 Tim. i. 9. Who called Peter, and

James, and John, and Andrew, and Zaccheus? Did not he?

7. It is to be changed, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Sanctification makes a great change; the judgment is changed, the disposition, the way, the company,—I am not I. It is a greater change that grace makes at conversion, than that death makes. At death grace is turned into glory, Job xiv. 14—“change come;” which is the turning of the same thing from a lower degree to a higher; but at conversion it is from sin to grace, between which there is no likeness.

8. It is to be cured. Sin is the sickness of the soul, a dangerous sickness, a mortal disease; though but few are sensible of it. Can we cure ourselves, or cure one another? No: the only physician is our Lord Jesus Christ, raised up of God for that purpose; no hand but his can heal us: “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases,” Ps. ciii. 3. *forgiveth* in justification; *healeth* in sanctification; by degrees. “I will heal their backsliding,” Hos. xiv. 4. *heal* their bent to backslide. Compare Hos. xi. 7. “My people are bent to backsliding from me.”

9. It is to be cleansed. Sin is the pollution of the soul: and it is pollution in grain, such as nothing can wash us from but the fountain opened, and that fountain is Christ, Zech. xiii. 1. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you,” Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This was fulfilled, when at their return from Babylon they were quite out of love with idols and idolatry, of which they were so fond before, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. v. 25, 26.

10. It is to be clothed. A sinful condition is a

naked condition, Rev. iii. 17. And what must poor naked souls do, but come to Christ, to his shop, and here buy of him white raiment? Rev. iii. 18. Zech. iii. 3, 4. "I clothed thee also with broidered work," &c. Ezek. xvi. 10—14. The prophet's statement is understood of their public privileges and advantages, above other people; but it is true also in a spiritual sense. Grace is rich raiment, princely, priestly, comely clothing, that waxeth not old.

11. It is to be consecrated. Sanctifying is the same with consecrating, that is, setting apart from common and profane to holy and spiritual uses, as persons, places, vessels, times, were under the Old Testament. In allusion to which, all true believers are a people sanctified, that is, set apart for God, separated from the world, and sin, and vanity, to be the Lord's peculiar; his temple; priests to him; anointed for that purpose, Ps. iv. 3. But,

III. How is Jesus Christ made all this to us? In what way, and by what means, doth he bring all this to pass in us and for us? That he doth it is plain in the text and elsewhere; but query, How?

1. Principally by the working of his Spirit and grace. The Spirit of Christ is the sanctifier. When he comes into the heart to dwell there, he renews, and he regenerates, and he raises, and he reconciles. The Father creates, the Son redeems, the Holy Ghost sanctifies, Tit. iii. 5, 6.—mark, *it is through Jesus Christ*. If he had not satisfied and died, to make God friends with us, he would never have sent the Spirit, to make us friends with him. The sending of the Spirit to

sanctify as well as to comfort us, is owing to the intercession of the Lord Jesus, John xiv. 16.

2. Instrumentally by the word, "Sanctify them through thy truth," John xvii. 17. Error never sanctifies. False doctrine, corrupt erroneous opinions, may prevail to bring people over to a party, but never to turn them from sin to God ; to convert, regenerate, renew. Truth only doth that, James i. 17. Tit. i. 1.

The word of truth begins, and the same carries on, this good work—As a word of conviction, of humiliation, of illumination, of regeneration, of faith, and of holiness, and therefore this should advance our esteem of the word of God, the written word, the word preached ; and we should hear it accordingly, Ps. cxix. 9.

IV. The practical improvement.

1. Shall I propound one needful question to you?—Are ye sanctified? is Jesus Christ made of God sanctification to you? It is a thing that may be known. We may make our calling and our election sure ; our election by our calling, by our sanctification ; for to be sanctified is to be called, and to be called is to be sanctified : and not our election only, but our justification and our glorification may be made sure by it, Rom. viii. 30. And how sweet, how comfortable will that be ! But how is this to be done ? There are three marks :

(1.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, it is become natural to us to walk in all holy obedience to the will of God. I say natural, not to the old, but to the new, nature. Now what is done naturally is done freely—as water from a spring, Ps. cx. 3.—easily, 1 John v. 3.—delightfully, John iv. 34.—and evenly, and constantly,

and perseveringly. Fire always burns, stones always tend downwards, because their nature is so. Thus it is with the old nature in sinning, Jer. vi. 7. and thus it is with the new nature in obeying, John iv. 14.

Then, says one, I fear I am not sanctified.

I reply, the trial is not to be made by any one single action at any one time, but by our course and way. How is it *ordinarily* with us? There is no man but doth something that beasts do; but is he therefore a beast? There is no beast but doth something that a man doth; but is he therefore a man?

(2.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, holiness is highly prized and dearly loved, and more and more of it earnestly desired. I believe it is never otherwise among the truly sanctified. Now, is it so with us? We love civility, and moral honesty, and temperance, and sobriety. So doth many a one that hates holiness.

(3.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, he is owned and acknowledged as our all in all. The crown is set upon his head. We rejoice in Christ Jesus. To us to live is Christ. All the sanctified are brought by their sanctification to Christ.—They were strangers to him before, but now they are friends.

2. Shall I suppose you now propounding to me another needful question,—What may I do that Christ may be made to me sanctification?

(1.) We must be inwardly and thoroughly convinced that there is an absolute necessity he should be so. This must be the case,

If we mean to please God in this world.—None but the sanctified are accepted of him. He hath no pleasure but where his image is, and his like-

ness is. Our sacrifices are an abomination, our prayers an abomination, otherwise. Till the tree is good the fruit cannot be good. And also,

If we mean to enjoy God in the other world.—
 “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” Heb. xii. 14. that is, see him so as to enjoy him. It is the *pure in heart* who shall see God, Matt. v. 8. Heaven would not be heaven to an unsanctified soul, if we might suppose such a one admitted there. Now are we convinced of this? “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” John iii. 3, 5. When Christ thus discoursed to Nicodemus, he was offended. It may be, so may some of you.—How can this be? But “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” must silence all objections.

(2.) We must apply ourselves to the Lord Jesus by faith and prayer.

By faith: closing with him, not only as the Lord our righteousness, but as the Lord our holiness. Not only as our only justifier by his merit, but as our only sanctifier by his Spirit.

By prayer: calling on him. Lord, if ever thou wilt do any thing for me, sanctify me, Ps. li. 10. Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians, should be ours for ourselves, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Thess. v. 23. So should Christ’s prayer, John xvii. 17, “Sanctify them through thy truth.”

(3.) We must attend upon the ordinances.

These are the conduit pipes through which the grace of sanctification is conveyed to poor souls.

3. Shall I suppose you now propounding one question more,—What must they do to whom Christ is already made sanctification?

(1.) They have cause to bless God for it every day, all their days, Ps. ciii. 1—3.

(2.) They must press after further degrees of sanctification; more and more, dying to sin, living to righteousness.

(3.) They must promote the sanctification of others also.



CHAPTER XXX.

CHRIST IS OUR SUPPLY.

But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
PHIL. iv. 19

DOCT. That the supply of all our needs is only from God, and only by Jesus Christ.

That is as much as to say, that Jesus Christ alone is our supply. Can you readily turn to a more sweet, comfortable text of Scripture than this is in all your Bibles, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation?

Supplies we would have, and here they are for us.

Supplies to *all* our needs; not some, but all.

And that from *God*—*My God* shall supply. Paul's God was the same that we call our God—Jehovah, blessed for ever. He says, *My God*, because he had supplied him, and his God would.

According to his riches in glory; that is, in such a manner, measure, and degree as becomes him. Not what is fit for us poor worms to receive, but what is fit for him to give.

And all this in and by and *through Jesus Christ*. Without him no supply is to be had to any of our needs. We might have starved, and died, and perished eternally, but for him; he himself is our supply.

Show, I. What our *needs* are, and what it is that he supplies us with.

II. What are the properties of this supply.

III. What special resemblances there are of it.

IV. What practical inferences are to be drawn from the whole.

I. What are our needs, and with what does the Lord Christ supply us?

There are seven things that we have need of, and there is supply to be had for them all in Jesus Christ, some pertaining to life, some to godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3.

1. Righteousness and strength.

Righteousness. They that have none have need; *There is none righteous, no not one*, Rom. iii. 10. We have to do with a righteous God, and a righteousness must be had, or there is no standing before him. Ho! where shall we have it? Of our own we have it not, nor hath any creature in heaven or earth wherewithal to supply us. It is to be had only in and by Jesus Christ.

He is the *Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. He is made unto us of God righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. Our God hath supplied our need of this in his Son; Dan. ix. 24. *He hath brought in everlasting righteousness.* To him, therefore, we must go; plead his righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins; the merit of his death, his righteousness for the acceptance of our performances.

Strength. They that are weak have need. Of what? Of strength. Now we are all weak, weak as water. Weak as sinners; how weak is thy heart! Weak as saints; under manifold infirmities. Weak to resist temptations, to bear afflictions, to perform duties. What shall we do? My God shall supply. Jehovah-Jireh—God will provide; nay, he has provided, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” Rom. v. 6. Have they need of strength? I will die and purchase it for them. So that now the believer may say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” Phil. iv. 13. See both these together, Isa. xlv. 24. “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”

2. Mercy and grace.

Mercy to pardon. This we are, or should be, calling for every day, Ps. li. 1; lvi. 1. for certainly we have need, whether we feel our need or no. Now have we any hope? Will our God supply us? He will, *through Jesus Christ*, but not otherwise. Out of him there is no mercy. The mercy of God is, therefore, called the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Jude 21, because our supplies of it are only in, and by, and through him.

Grace. Hast thou no need of grace, quickening grace, preventing grace, renewing grace, assisting grace? They that think they have no need have most need of all. Now, where is it to be had? *My God shall supply*, but it must be through Jesus Christ, "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace," John i. 16. Compare this with Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Away to him then, that is, to God by him. See both together in one scripture, Heb. iv. 16. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

3. Peace and comfort. I mean that which is inward; peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost. Do ye want it any of you? Many who do, think they do not, mistaking false peace of their own speaking to themselves for the true peace. Away with that, and come to Christ for the true peace, for that which he calls *his* peace, John xiv. 27—*my peace*. If he speak peace no matter who speaks trouble; if he troubles no matter who speaks peace, Eph. ii. 14.—*he is our peace*.

4. Food and raiment. Under these two are comprehended all the necessities of life, and sometimes under one of them—bread; *Give us this day our daily bread*. Now have we no need of these? We all have, we cannot live without them, without daily supplies of them; and whence are they to be had? Jehovah-jireh—*my God shall supply*; but it is only by and through Jesus Christ. He bought every meal's meat for us, and every suit of clothes for us, or we had never had either, and, therefore, to him we must

have recourse every day. In all our needs, even of these things, we should say, Lord Jesus, feed me, clothe me, to-day. Hath he ever yet failed you? Luke xxii. 35.

5. Protection from enemies, bodily and ghostly; our great adversary, the devil, and all our little-adversaries. They would swallow us up every day, if our God did not watch over us, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield. Our enemy sickness would destroy our health, our enemy pain our ease, our enemies the caterpillars, and the locusts, and the palmer-worms, all the increase of our fields; the murrain our cattle, the fire our houses; but he preserves and keeps us, Psalm cxxi. So likewise for public enemies.

6. A guard through death. We must all shortly, in the order in which God hath appointed, take our turn through the darksome valley; and dare we venture alone, without a convoy? There is no safe convoy but Jesus Christ, Ps. xxiii. 4. His presence with us, will bring us safe through, else we perish, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. It is he alone that can make a lane through this Red Sea, this Jordan. Jordan's rough, said a dying person, often repeating it, Jordan's rough. It may be, we may find it so, but the winds and the seas obey *him*.

7. A guide to glory. Shall we be supplied with this also? Never fear it, if Christ be ours, Ps. lxxiii. 24. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death," Ps. xlviii. 14.—beyond death. Not only to death, and through death, but beyond death. Compare Ps. cxxi. 1. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,"—beyond the hills,— "from whence cometh my help."

II. What kind of supplies are to be had for poor needy souls with Jesus Christ?

1. Rich supplies. *My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches.* A rich God gives rich supplies. He is rich in mercy, pardoning mercy, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. Therefore, he multiplies to pardon great sins. He is rich in grace, 1 Pet. v. 10. the God of all grace; therefore he gives *liberally*, 2 Cor. ix. 9. He is rich in comfort, the God of *all comfort*, 2 Cor. i. 3. God *who comforts*, 2 Cor. vii. 6. Therefore he makes the consolations of his people oftentimes to abound; not only full, but running over; "I can hold no more."^{*}

2. Ready supplies. We need not go far for them, they are always at hand; the word is nigh thee. Other friends that should supply our needs are many times at a distance, afar off, and either know them not, or do know them, but cannot send to us. But there is nothing of that here. Our heavenly Father knows what we want, and whenever he pleases to supply, the way is short. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we may hear and receive from the blessed Jesus in heaven, Ps. xlv. 1—11.

3. Glorious supplies—according to his riches *in glory*. That is glorious that is singular and superlative, such as makes him famous and renowned whose it is; now such fame, such great fame, is our Lord's. His supplies are such as he

* "Sir," said the eminently holy Mr. John Janeway to a reverend divine who discoursed with him, in his last illness, on the excellency of Christ, and the glory of the invisible world, 'I feel something of it. My heart is as full as it can hold in this lower state. I can hold no more here. O that I could but let you know what I feel.' Clarke's Lives, fol. 1683 p. 77.

is worthy to be praised for, his supplies of mercy and grace. How many thousands in heaven, how many thousands on earth, are blessing him for these;—"Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever," Phil. iv. 20. They put a glory also upon them that have them, making them famous, as Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, Paul, being pardoned sinners.

4. Gradual supplies. We are not supplied with every thing all at once, but now with one thing, then with another; now in a lower, after in a higher, degree, Prov. iv. 18. A converted person no sooner hath a grain of grace, but his good will would immediately be perfect in grace; no sooner is he comforted a little, but presently he would have full assurance. Not so; soft and fair; when out of Egypt, you are not forthwith in Canaan. You must be willing to receive supplies as God is pleased to communicate them.

5. Universal supplies : *all* your needs.

But is there any more than one thing needful?

There is only one main thing chiefly and principally needful, but that one thing branches itself out into many things. Lo, there are in Christ supplies for all; all persons, at all times, in all things.

6. Undeserved supplies. There is nothing in us to merit any good thing at God's hands. Whatever we would have, we must sue for it, as a beggar for an alms. If a beggar be blind, sick, sore, naked, dumb, old, his blindness, sickness, his disease, his nakedness, his want of speech, his age, speak for him, not in a way of merit, but as a meet object for mercy to work upon: so it is here. Our spiritual maladies bespeak us fit

objects of mercy—but they surely lay no claim to it.

7. Covenant supplies, made over to us by promise ; and he is faithful, that hath promised.

8. Constant supplies ; daily, duly, for ever

III. What resemblances are there of this ?

We see it illustrated.

1. As the heavens supply the earth. The earth would be a barren, useless thing, if it were not for what the heavens supply it with every day, in daily influences ; the warmth it has is from above ; the moisture, and thence comes its fruitfulness ; Hos. ii. 21. “I will hear the earth,” therefore the earth must call.—We are the earth, earthy ; the heavens are Christ, heavenly ; unless he supply us with warmth, moisture, sunshine, rain, what are we ? Hos. vi. 3. But then he must hear us, hear from us. We should be crying, calling, Help, Lord.

2. As the earth supplies the inhabitants. The earth is not our mother only, but our nurse. We were not only made out of it, but we are maintained by it, Eccl. v. 9. Thence we have all our corn, wine, oil, hemp, flax,—to feed, to clothe us. A good nurse gives abundance of milk. Now as the earth nourishes, and maintains all that live upon it, high and low, rich and poor, so it is with Jesus Christ. As we live by him, so we live upon him. But then as to this also, the earth must hear the corn, and the corn hear Jezreel, Hos. ii. 22. There must be asking by prayer ; *seeking* in the use of means ; *knocking* by importunity ; and persevering in both.

3. As the head supplies the members. The head is the treasure of the body, wherein the spirits are lodged and laid up for the use of the

body; and thence it is that all the members are supplied, and when they fail the body languishes and dies. So all believers, from Christ their head, having union with him, receive vital influences—righteousness, and strength, and grace, and peace, and comfort, and quickening, in want of which they are weak, and can do nothing, John xv. 5.

4. As the root supplies the branches. In the root of a tree the sap is lodged, and laid up for the use of the tree; thence it moves up into the branches, little and big, and the sap they receive is that which nourishes and feeds, and makes them grow and bring forth fruit. So all believers receive from Christ. He is our root, John xv. 4, 5.

5. As the sun supplies the stars; the stars have no light of their own, nor the moon neither, no more than a clod of earth, further than the sun shining upon them puts light into them. Their light is a borrowed light. So is all the spiritual light that we have—knowledge, grace, comfort—borrowed from Christ.

6. As the sea supplies the rivers, Eccl. i. 7. They come from it, they return to it. So the glory of all our receivings every day from Jesus Christ, should return to him again, in thankful acknowledgments.

7. As the fountain supplies the cisterns. The cisterns are often emptying, the bowls emptying; away to the well daily. So, in this case, Christ is our fountain.

8. As the store-chamber supplies the family. It is said concerning Joseph, that he built store-houses, and there he lodged the corn, and thence the people had it as they needed. Our store-

house is Jesus Christ. There God the Father hath lodged and laid up a fulness for us. Therefore, to him we must go. And may we hope to speed? Never fear it: My God *shall* supply—he *shall*—observe with what confidence he speaks it.

IV. The practical improvement.

1. Beg of God this day to make you sensible of your needs: multitudes are not, Rev. iii. 17. We do not look into our souls, turn our eyes inward, and that is the reason. Beg the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. For “he hath filled the hungry with good things,” Luke i. 53.

2. Believe the truth of this saying of Paul’s; he was not hired to proclaim that which is not, to deceive people. It is a real truth, *My God shall supply all your need.*—Ps. xxiii. 1.

3. Have recourse to the blessed Jesus; tell him what thy need is—mercy, grace, righteousness.

4. Acknowledge him in all supplies. .



CHAPTER XXXI.

CHRIST IS OUR RESURRECTION

Jesus said unto her, I AM THE RESURRECTION, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.
John xi. 25, 26.

HERE we have it from the mouth of the Lord Jesus himself, and he having spoken it we may

safely believe and assert, and make a DOCTRINE of it,—

That Jesus Christ is the *resurrection* to true believers.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What proof there is of it.

III. How we are to improve it.

1. How are we to understand this—*I am the resurrection*? There is a three-fold resurrection, and Jesus Christ is all the three to true believers.

1. There is *spiritual* resurrection; which is, the raising of the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is called the first resurrection, for so I think we are to understand that passage, Rev. xx. 6. All that are made truly holy, by the renewing, sanctifying grace of God, are certainly thereby delivered from the second death, that is, from burning in hell for ever. Now all true believers have this holiness wrought in them; and how, but by Jesus Christ? When he is made unto us *sanctification*, then he is thus made unto us *resurrection*, Eph. ii. 1. It is his voice that opens the grave and fetches us out; he says unto us, Live; and we live, and the time is a time of love. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live,” John v. 25.—and *now* is; then, at that very time. There was a present resurrection, in the conversion of divers that left all, and followed him. No less than almighty power can do this, can bring to pass such a wonderful change.

Examine, inquire, brethren, Are ye thus raised again? Are ye *passed from death to life*? There is such a thing, and it may be known, and we

can have no comfort in living the life of nature, if we be not spiritually alive, if we do not live the life of grace.

Now one good mark to know it by is,—the *end* that we live to. Whether is that—God, or self? Do we live to God, or to ourselves? Rom. vi. 11.

Another is by the *food* that we live upon. Is that Christ? Phil. i. 21.—his merit and righteousness for justification, his spirit and grace for sanctification?

Another is, by the *rule* that we live by. Is that the rule of the new creature—the word of God? Is that the card and compass we sail by, the light and lamp we walk by? or, is it something else—the dictates of our own corrupt nature, carnal reason, fleshly appetites, the course and custom of this vain world? Try by this.

Let me exhort you. Would you have Christ this resurrection to you? Close immediately with the gospel call; stand it out no longer against the voice, entreating—beseeching. As soon as ever Christ said to Lazarus, *Come forth*, presently Lazarus came forth, without ifs or ands, without making objections. How, you ask, can I that am dead stir? No, though you are as he was with the grave-clothes about him, yet he that was dead came forth. So I address you—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14.

2. There is a *figurative* resurrection; and that is, the raising of a person, or people, from an exceedingly low, miserable, afflicted, helpless condition, to a state of comfort and joy, peace and safety. Such a thing there is, and it is a resurrection. There is something in it, like to a resurrection, Hos. vi. 1, 2.—when smitten and torn,

reckoned as dead ; when delivered, and recovered, and settled again, reckoned as raised again. Read Ezek. xxxvii. That valley of dead and dry bones, was the nation and people of the Jews, in the time of their captivity in Babylon, where they lay past all hope, till the end of the seventy years, and then, by a proclamation from Cyrus, they were released, and it was like a kind of a resurrection. It is in like manner with them at this day, and hath been for near seventeen hundred years,—a scattered, broken, miserable people. There is a time, we hope, at hand, when God will gather them again, that there may be one sheep-fold, as there is one Shepherd. Now, how is that time called ? Resurrection time, Rom. xi. 15.—life from the dead—Once more : The condition of many ministers and people amongst ourselves, of many in France, hath been, in outward appearance, a dead condition. The words of the Act* are, that they shall be as if naturally dead ; but, blessed be God, there hath been a resurrection, in some measure, a coming out of the grave again, of which, whoever was the instrument, the Lord Jesus himself was the principal agent. He is the resurrection to us. When a company of non-conformists went to court, to congratulate the king and queen, and to thank them for the present liberty, being clothed alike in long black cloaks, such as ministers usually wear in London, a scoffer said, Whither are all these going, to a burial ? No, Sir, said one of them, to a resurrection.† It is so, likewise, in reference to personal

* The Act of Uniformity, 13 and 14. Chas. II. c. 4.

† A similar anecdote, and probably originating in it, is related of the Rev. Thomas Bradbury, in the reign of King George I. See Wilson's Hist. of Dissenting Churches, v. 3. 514

deliverances from personal calamities, as Isaac, when bound and laid on the altar, Heb. xi. 19. It was Paul's case, 2 Cor. i. 8—10. Hath not Jesus Christ, in this sense, been the resurrection many a time to thee, and to me? We were brought low, and he helped us. Was not Job's restoration a resurrection? so some understand Job xix. 25, 26.

Learn hence, on whom to depend, and to whom to fly, in such cases; even to the blessed Jesus.

Learn also, to whom to give the praise of such a resurrection, public or personal; even to the same.

3. There is a *proper* resurrection, and that is, the raising up of the dead bodies, properly, naturally dead, out of which the life and the soul is departed. And is Jesus Christ that too? He is. That is chiefly meant here. The text was spoken to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, upon occasion of raising her brother to life again, after he had been dead four days. Now, as to this, Jesus Christ is the resurrection three ways:

(1.) As he was the only one that ever raised himself to life again: no one ever did it but he. (It is not with us in the sleep of death as it is in the death of sleep, when we have slept enough we wake of ourselves. No; the human body must be waked.) And therefore, as in some places it is said, God raised him from the dead, so in other places it is said, He rose again on the third day; making it his own act and deed, 1 Cor. xv. 4. He had two natures, the divine, and human. His human nature could never have raised itself; no, his divine nature raised his human nature. Christ, as God, raised himself as man.

(2.) As by his power alone it was that all were

raised that ever were raised ; all under the Old Testament, all under the New. ' Though himself in his own proper person, raised three only ; the ruler's daughter, newly dead ; the widow's son, upon the bier ; Lazarus, buried ; yet all that ever any of the prophets raised, or that ever any of the apostles raised, they raised in his name, not in their own ; by a power derived from him, not by any power of their own : allude to Acts iii. 12, 16.

(3.) As to the day of the great resurrection at the end of the world, when all the dead shall be raised. It will be done only by the power of the Lord Jesus, especially as to true believers ; the raising of them will in a special manner be his doing. And as to this it is that he is the *resurrection*.

II. Let us consider the proof of this.

1. It is certain there is to be such a thing. As sure as we must die, we shall live again ; go to the grave, and come out again. But Job asks, " If a man die shall he live again ? " Job xiv. 14. I answer,—Not a life of opportunity again. There have been, and there are, those that deny this ; old Sadducees, new Sadducees, 1 Cor. xv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 18. I shall give no other proof at present but that of our Lord Jesus, Matt. xxii. 23—34. Therefore Abraham was alive—in soul—but the soul of Abraham was not Abraham, therefore his body must live too.—Can this be ? Yes, easily, to almighty power.

2. For the manner of it, how it is to be, God hath revealed it to his holy apostles, else we could not have known it :—" For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God :

and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

The Lord himself shall descend. This Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other. The Father hath committed it wholly into his hand. He is the resurrection: the same that ascended, the same shall also descend. He descended once in rags of flesh, but when he shall descend the second time, it will be in robes of glory.

There will be a *great shout*, the *voice of the arch-angel*, that is, of Christ himself. We never read of more than one arch-angel, the Lord of the angels. *And the trump of God.*—Trumpets were used in calling of assemblies. So here—the greatest of assemblies that ever was. They are used at the assizes, when the judges are going to the bench. So here—This was the trumpet that Jerome* said was always sounding in his ears.

The dead in Christ shall rise first—either, the dead for Christ, the martyrs, before other saints—or, the dead in Christ, that is, all true believers, before the rest of mankind. Those who lived and died in true union with him by faith, which union still remained even when dead; or, before those that shall then be found alive.

And what then? *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, &c.* This is the short account the Scriptures gives us concerning this matter; and we are bound to believe, without doubting or wavering, that so it shall be.

Read to the same purpose, but more fully,

* A celebrated father of the church. He died A. D. 420.

1 Cor. xv. It is the scope of the whole chapter. Where the apostle,

(1.) Positively asserts and proves that there is to be such a thing, that all true believers must and shall certainly rise again at the last day. See one of his arguments, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," *v.* 19.

(2.) Plainly lays the ground of it upon Christ's being made the resurrection to them. If he be risen, then they shall rise. But he is risen; therefore believers shall rise.

The consequence he proves,

From their union with him. He is the head, they the members. It is a real union, 1 Cor. xv. 15. If the body of one saint were lost, there would be a maim in Christ's mystical body.—Therefore it is said we shall be changed, that of the same metal our glorious body may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. It is said also, that the head and members shall be together in the same place, John xvii. 24.

He is the first-fruits; they the lump, 1 Cor. xv. 20. Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. Read Deut. xxvi. 1, &c. It is a relative union.

He is the second Adam; they the children descended from him, 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. This is another relative union.—He proves it also,

From the victory that he hath obtained over every thing that might hinder; sin, death, the grave, the devil, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Is not Christ the resurrection to unbelievers? must not they rise also?

They must rise; but neither by virtue of any union they have with him, nor any victory he hath obtained for them. The devil is not against

the rising of the wicked ; he doth nothing to oppose or hinder it ; he would have their souls and bodies to come together again, in order to their being tormented together. The grave is free to part with them for the same reason. But they would hinder the rising of the godly. Aye, but they shall not, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. The wicked are raised by the power of Christ, in order to condemnation ; but the righteous by their union with Christ : the one in wrath, the other in love, John v. 28, 29. The righteous to be married—crowned ; the wicked to be executed.

3. He declares, also, with what kind of bodies they shall be raised ; the self-same in substance, Job xix. 26. but greatly changed in qualities ; no defect, no deformity. If scars have been received in suffering, they are not to disgrace, but to honour them. They shall be made like Christ's body ; either that, Matt. xvii. 1, 2. or that, Acts i. 9—11. or that, Rev. i. 13—16. In particular, see 1 Cor. xv. 35—38, 42—44. Their bodies shall be made spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, powerful, able to attend the soul in all its actings and operations, without weariness : not as here below ; but able to bear up all that weight of glory which is prepared. In a word, have you seen the body of the sun in its noon-day brightness, such a light as you are not able to behold ? Then you have seen something like it. " They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars ;" but it is said in Matt. xiii. 43. " They shall shine forth as the sun."

III. The improvement.

1. That of the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 15. " Wherefore comfort one another." It is a thing that the servants of the Lord should be often

talking of one to another, for the comforting and encouraging one of another. If one another, sure ourselves much more. This should be done,

Under bodily blemishes and infirmities :—they shall shortly be done away.

Against fears of death and the grave :—it is but unclothing us to put on better—the grave is as the refiner's furnace.

Against inordinate sorrow at the death of godly friends, John xi. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 13. They are not dead, but asleep—as when we take leave over night.

2. That of the same apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 58. “Be ye steadfast,”—it may be rendered, *Exhort one another*,—“unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

A notable spur to all manner of duty in general—to abound therein. It will certainly not be in vain.

In particular—to serve God with our bodies, 1 Cor. vi. 14, 15—not to serve the devil and lust, and sin with them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHRIST IS OUR REDEMPTION.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us redemption. 1 Cor. i. 30

THE words themselves are the DOCTRINE—

That Jesus Christ is made of God unto all them that are in him *redemption*.

Show, I. What this means.

II. What kind of redemption.

III. What the duty is that it calls for from us.

I. What does this mean,—“made redemption?”

You may think we had this before, when it was showed that he is made freedom to us, from John viii. 36.* But you will see presently that there is something else meant by it.

He is made of God redemption to us ; that is, God hath ordained and appointed him from all eternity, and in the fulness of time raised him up, and sent him, to be the author and procurer of redemption for us ; or, which is all one, to be a redeemer to us. So that if asked, what did Jesus Christ come into the world to do ? We answer, to redeem us. They are the first words of Zechariah’s song, Luke i. 68.

Now to redeem is, in general, to recover those that are in bondage out of bondage. As suppose one rowing in a galley under the Turks, is rescued (which may be done three ways, besides

* See Chapter XV

that of voluntary discharge and dismissal)—as the Jews were released by Cyrus out of their captivity in Babylon, he may be said to be redeemed. Redemption, viz.

1. By power ; when those who kept us in bondage are conquered and overcome.

2. By exchange ; when one prisoner is let go for another.

3. By price ; when a sum of money is paid to buy off a prisoner, more or less, according as the quality of the prisoner is. Now this last is properly redemption, and this last is the way in which Jesus Christ hath made us free. He hath bought us out of the hands of divine justice, by laying down a ransom for us.

If you ask what that was ? I answer, that sometimes it is said to be his life, Matt. xx. 28. sometimes himself, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and sometimes his blood, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. These three come to the same. We are redeemed by Christ dying for us, shedding his blood, laying down his life, offering up himself. This fully satisfied the demands of God's justice. Let me have this, saith he, and I have enough. I expect no more by way of satisfaction for the sin of man. I am well pleased, atoned, reconciled, made friends. To this purpose we are told of a covenant of redemption which was transacted from all eternity between the Father and the Son, the terms whereof were—That if the Son would come and be man and die, that dying of his should be accepted as the price or ransom of all the elect, how many soever there were. The Son accepted of this motion, did what was to be done, suffered what was to be suffered, and so became our redemtion. See some foot-

steps of this covenant transaction in two scriptures, Ps. xl. 6—8. Isa. xlix. 2, 6, 9. But,

II. What kind of redemption is this

1. Needed redemption. It is the redemption that we needed. He came to supply all our needs. Now among other needs, being in bondage, we needed one to redeem us : not only one to clothe us, being naked ; to feed us, being hungry ; to wash us, being filthy ; to heal us, being wounded ; to cure us, being sick ;—but to redeem us. If he had done all this for us in our bondage, and left us still in bondage, we had been miserable notwithstanding. Therefore, he comes and buys our freedom, pays our ransom. We were God's prisoners, and the devil was the gaoler. We were left in his hand, under his power, and his we must have been for ever, but for Christ the Redeemer.

2. It is a nonsuch redemption, when compared with other redemption. Whether personal, as Joseph out of prison, or Peter, Acts xii. or Daniel, out of the lions' den. Whether public ; as from Egypt, from Babylon. It surpasses them all in number, way, and consequences.

3. Distinguishing redemption. It is the redemption that others needed, as well as we, but it is denied to them, and granted to us, therefore, I must call it distinguishing redemption.

It is denied to the angels that sinned. They had as much need as we, for they are in bondage as well as we ; under God's wrath and curse as well as we ; nay, before we were ; but he took not on him the nature of angels : the commons are ransomed, the nobles left behind. He paid no price to redeem them. As that tree fell so it lies, and must lie for ever.

It is denied to the greatest part of mankind, as to the saving benefit and efficacy of it ; the elect reap the benefit absolutely, others conditionally, yet there is no collusion, because the decree is secret ; for multitudes there are that know nothing of it, and of those few that do multitudes reject and slight it, and are never the better for it : Rev. v. 9. “ *Redeemed to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*” How should we then adore, and admire ! “ Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world ?” John xiv. 22.

4. It is diverse, manifold redemption according to the manifold evils that we lay under. They are of three sorts—temporal, spiritual, eternal

(1.) He is redemption to us from temporal evils. Such as concern the body, and the life that now is ; such as sickness, death, poverty. Not that they shall not befall us—for they do, and all things come alike to all, redeemed and unredeemed. But, that they shall not hurt us. The sting of them is taken out, Ps. xci. 10. No evil things befall. There is no curse attends them, Gal. iii. 13. Were this rightly understood, and duly made use of, it were the sweetest argument imaginable, both against fears of temporal calamities before they come, Job v. 19. And the best against inordinate dejections and despondencies when they are come. But,

(2.) Which is better, it is redemption to us from spiritual evils. These are worse evils than the former, because they affect the better part of us, which is our souls ; them first and immediately, but not them only, but our bodies also. I shall mention two only :

The *guilt of sin* ; whereby we are bound over to punishment, the fear whereof causes bondage, Heb. ii. 14. 'To redeem us from this, he is made righteousness to us for our justification, that is, for our discharge from that guilt, for the forgiveness of all our sins, and the accepting of us as righteous. This is an unspeakable blessing and benefit, and it is made over to all the Lord's redeemed ones, who are now to reckon themselves at peace with God, Rom. v. 1.

The *filth and power of sin* ; whereby sin hath dominion over us, and we are perfect slaves to it, the vilest of slaves, John viii. 34. 'To redeem us from this he is made sanctification to us ; he sends his Spirit into the heart, who renews and regenerates, turns the man from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, enabling him to die to sin more and more, and to live to righteousness more and more. 'This he doth as a Redeemer, and is doing ; it is called *redeeming* us, Tit. ii. 14. *By redeeming from all iniquity*, the apostle doth not there mean from the guilt and punishment of it only, but from the power and dominion of it, from the love and liking of it. It is the same with *purifying*. These two, justification, and sanctification are never parted, Ps. ciii. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(3.) There is another sort of evils yet, and those are eternal evils ; and by redemption here we are especially to understand our deliverance from those.

Because it is mentioned after righteousness and sanctification, as a thing different from them. And

Because of what we find in other scriptures, where redemption is applied to something in the

other world: "Waiting for the redemption of the body," Rom. viii. 23. that is, the resurrection and glorification of our bodies: compare Luke xxi. 28. with Eph. iv. 30. *the day of redemption*. This is certainly some day yet to come, when the work of our redemption shall be fully finished, the top-stone laid; for hitherto, as we see and know but in part, so we are redeemed but in part. In Heb. ix. 12. it is called *eternal* redemption. Our present redemption by Christ is eternal in the design and tendency of it; it is in order to eternity; but that to come is eternal in regard of the eternal evils it frees us from, and the eternal happiness it puts us into possession of, when it shall be accomplished, and Jesus Christ is made all that to us.

Taking it in this sense, I shall show,

1. What those eternal evils are which redemption frees us from.

(1.) It frees us for ever, not only from the guilt, and filth, and power of sin, but from the very being of it also. It must not only no longer have a throne in us, as at conversion, but not so much as a seat or place in us, and that for ever. And are ye not glad at the very thought of this? Nay, it frees us from all possibility of sinning to eternity. Adam had no sin, but a possibility of sin he had, and so it appeared, for he did sin. Paul groaned for this, Rom. vii. 24.

(2.) It frees us from Satan ever having any more to do with us, either as a tempter or as a tormentor. He is busy now with the saved, 1 Pet. v. 8. and he will be more busy hereafter with those that perish, Matt. xviii. 34. But

where the redeemed are he comes not, Rom. xvi. 20.

(3.) It frees us from all sorrow and suffering, of what kind soever, in mind or body. All tears shall be wiped away, there shall be no weeping, nor wailing, nor gnashing of teeth; no fire, no worm, no brimstone, no darkness. These are the portion of the damned, not of the redeemed, Rev. xxi. 4.

(4.) It frees us from all society with wicked and ungodly men, and that for ever. They are blended here, and it pleases neither, Ps. cxx. 5, 6. But there is a redemption coming, Matt. xxv. 33. All this happiness you say a stone hath, no sin,—no sorrow,—therefore I shall show,

2. What there is that is positive in this redemption.

(1.) As soon as the redeemed die, (for die they must, even as others: Jesus Christ hath not redeemed us from dying,) their souls immediately go to God, to the vision and fruition of him in glory, Luke xxiii. 43. Phil. i. 23. It grieves me and shames me that I can speak with no more sense and savour of these things. Such apprehensions as a child prior to its birth hath of this world, such we have of the world to come.

(2.) At the resurrection, at the last day, the same soul and the same body shall come together again. Though we are not redeemed from death, we are to be from the grave; not from going down into it, but from being held by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. Hos. xiii. 14. Nay, not raised only, but raised incorruptible and immortal; glorious, like Christ's glorified body.

(3.) To all eternity there shall be a fulness of uninterrupted joy and felicity ; a remaining rest ; a sabbath without a week of working days after it, perpetual, eternal. Lo, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. It is a happiness such as the infinite love and wisdom of the great God could contrive, and the infinite love and power of the great God could effect and perform, on the behalf of a remnant, whom his delight was to honour. Read Esther vi. 6—9. But that was a poor honour in comparison with this honour.

3. I shall show how Jesus Christ is made this to us, this future redemption.

He is the purchaser of it ; it was bought with his blood, bought back. We had mortgaged it for the forbidden fruit, and must never have retrieved it, had not he died, Eph. i. 14. It is redeemed for us, and we are redeemed for it.

He is our forerunner in it, Heb. vi. 20. He went thither as our attorney or proxy, to take possession of the purchase in our name and stead, John xiv. 1, 2.

It is he that himself actually puts us into possession of it.

When we die the angels are his messengers, sent by him to convoy us into Abraham's bosom.

At the resurrection it is his voice and trumpet that raises the dead ; *he* is the *resurrection*.

At the judgment he is the Judge, the sentence is from him ; Come, ye blessed.

It is he himself alone that is the sole object of all our future happiness ; to be with *him*, to

see and enjoy *him*, is our future redemption, Rev. xxi. 23.

III. The improvement,

1. Then it concerns us all, by all means, to give all diligence to make sure to ourselves our interest in this redemption.

It is certain all are not thus redeemed ; abundance of mankind miscarry and perish.

It is certain those that do are miserable creatures, and will be so to all eternity.

Those will be most miserable that were once in a fair possibility of being saved, and yet missed ; therefore, I beg of you, for the Lord's sake, and for your own soul's sake, look about you.

Now those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but *such, as are in him*. Are ye in him, grafted into him, by a lively faith ? Have ye his Spirit ?

Those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but such, to whom he is made *wisdom*, and *righteousness*, and *sanctification*. Hath he been these to you ? If so, the redemption is yours. Is he your *wisdom* ? have ye left the follies of sin and chosen wisely ? Is he your *righteousness* ? have ye called him by that name, and renounced your own merits ? Is he your *sanctification* ? are ye new creatures ?

2. If Jesus Christ be made of God this redemption to you, then, in God's name, take the comfort of it. Lift up the head and hands that hang down ; *rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice*. Were there but a small portion of worldly happiness made sure to us in reversion, after a few years in this world ; were we

sure of some great lordship, with the appurtenances of it; our thoughts would be running upon it, we should solace ourselves in the foretaste of it; and lo, heaven itself made ours will not keep us from drooping! It is our unbelief that hinders our joy.

3. Then live as the redeemed of the Lord. Live,

With your eye upon the redemption: be viewing it often, aiming at it as your scope, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Live with your hand upon the plough; abounding always in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Live with your feet upon the world; despising its glories, bearing patiently its frowns, Heb. x. 34.

Live with your heart upon the Redeemer; in love and thankfulness, Ps. cvii. 1, 2.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHRIST IS OUR LESSON.

But ye have not so learned Christ. Eph. iv. 20.

Doctr. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the *lesson* that we are to learn.

Show, I. The meaning of this.

II. What kind of lesson Jesus Christ is.

III. What inferences may be drawn from it.

I. Let us inquire into the meaning of this—He is a lesson.

To understand this, we must look upon the church as a great school, wherein we ourselves, and all others that are baptized with Christian baptism, are thereby entered as scholars. Baptism is the enrolling or enlisting of us as scholars in this school. And can any thing be said then, with reason, against the baptizing of infants? Do not ye oftentimes send your children to school very young and little, before you expect they should learn much? No matter, say you, we will enter them. Now in this great school,

1. There is a head master, or teacher, and that is the Spirit of God, the alone teacher of hearts, John xiv. 26; xv. 1.

2. There are the ushers and under teachers; and those are the ministers, whose work it is, as ministers, to instruct and teach people, young and old, weak and strong, one with milk by catechizing, the other with strong meat by preaching, as they are able to bear it.

3. There is the lesson they are to learn, and that is, in one word, *Christ*. Christ is the lesson, the great lesson, taught in the church. Learn him, and you learn all. Learn not him, and you learn nothing. The expression may seem harsh and uncouth, but you see it is Paul's phrase of speech, and, I think, he had the Spirit of God,—*Ye have not so learned Christ*.

What is it to learn Christ?

1. We must learn to *know* him. This is absolutely necessary, and on this the foundation of all the rest is to be laid, John xvii. 3. it is life eternal; the way to life eternal; the first step towards it. The knowledge of Christ blessed Paul preferred before every thing in this world, Phil. iii. 8, 10. Now how unlike herein are the most of

us to Paul, who prefer every thing else before this. There are four things, especially, which we should all covet to know concerning Christ.

(1.) Who and what he is in himself. He is God and he is man. He is God-man.

He is God blessed for ever, begotten of the Father before all worlds. This account of the knowledge he had of him Peter gave when the question was put to him, Matt. xvi. 15, *Who say ye that I am?—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Do ye know this? Not with comprehensive knowledge,—as if we could, by our finite understandings, fathom the depth of it, for it is a mystery *how* it should be, a son without a mother,—but with the knowledge of faith that it is. We are to believe it because God hath revealed it.

He is man also. He was born of the Virgin Mary, in the fulness of time; when the word was made flesh: and here is another mystery to be believed, and not to be pried into—that there should be a son without a father. Now these two natures, united in one person, are Christ. Have ye learned this? O learn it.

(2.) What he hath done.

He hath fulfilled all righteousness, by the perfect obedience of his life.

He hath satisfied God's justice for all our sins, by the merit of his death.

He hath raised himself again out of the grave, on the third day, and thereby declared himself to be the Son of God with power.

Yea, and he is still doing for us in heaven, where he lives to make intercession.

And hereafter, at the end of the world, he will certainly come again with great glory to judge

both quick and dead. Have ye learned this? Do ye know it? Again,

(3.) What he hath said. There are a great many choice sayings of his recorded in the book called the Bible; nay, choicé sermons preached by him, for he was a preacher. Those we should learn, for they contain in them the whole will of God concerning our salvation, which he came out of the Father's bosom to reveal and make known. And yet how many heed them not, nor mind to learn them; they had rather be reading an idle romance, or play-book. God complains, Hos. viii. 12. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing,"—much more, my gospel.

(4.) What he is made of God to all his elect, such as were given to him from all eternity by the Father. He is their foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness. Have ye learned this? Ye have heard it often, but have ye learned it? Have ye understood all these things? Can ye say ye know them? There is a two-fold knowledge:

One that swims in the head, and goes no further.

Another, that sinks into the heart.

2. We must learn to *believe* in him. Not only learn what it is to believe, but do it. Many can answer to what is faith in Jesus Christ, that have not faith in him. Now to learn Christ is to have faith in Christ; none else can say they have learned him, John vi. 45. To believe in Christ, is to come to Christ, as the sick man comes to the physician, the thirsty to the fountain, the hungry to the cupboard, the malefactor to the city of refuge. Have ye thus learned him, received him,

closed with him, let all go for him, all your sins, all your own righteousness, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ?

3. We must learn to *love* him. The apostle speaks of being *taught of God to love one another*, 1 Thess. iv. 9. and certainly there is such a thing as being taught of God to love Jesus Christ. Now have ye been so taught? Can ye appeal to him, with Peter, and say, Lord Jesus, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee? They that do not love him have not learned him. Learn but two things of him, and you cannot but love him:

How lovely he is in himself, Ps. xlv. 2. Cant. v. 10, &c. And

How loving he hath been to you in giving himself for you, Gal. ii. 20.—in washing you from your sins in his own blood. Paul prays—“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” Eph. iii. 19.

4. We must learn to *obey* him, to do in every thing as he would have us to do. Faith and love without this, if we could suppose them without it, which certainly they are not if true, are nothing, signify nothing, John xiv. 15; xv. 14. Paul is in the context exhorting Christians to walk worthy of their calling, not as do the heathen; No, says he, you have *not so learned Christ*—you are better taught.

5. We must learn to suffer for him, if he call us thereunto. And what day passes over our heads wherein we are not, in one kind or other, called to it? Now have ye learned to do it, to take up your cross, and to follow him? Luke ix. 23.

II. What kind of lesson is Christ?

1. He is the lesson that all should learn ; ai that mean to be saved should learn Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12 John xiv. 6. You are not all bound to learn Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew ; to learn Logic, Philosophy, or Mathematics ; to learn the several trades and manufactures ; but you are all bound to learn Christ, bound by the covenant of your baptism, bound by your being called Christians. Either cease to be called a Christian, or learn Christ,—to know, believe, love, him.

2. He is the lesson that any one may learn. There are some arts and sciences that are above and beyond the capacity of some people, though they would never so much wish it ; though they desire and endeavour all that ever they can, yet it will not do ; they labour in vain. Now such a lesson Christ is not. He is an easy lesson, easy to be learned. Mistake me not ; I do not mean easy to mere nature ; no, it is quite contrary ; it is to mere nature hard and difficult, nay, utterly impossible. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,” 1 Cor. ii. 14. Witness Nicodemus, John iii. But easy—to the mind enlightened, easy—to the willing learner, Prov. xiv. 6. easy—where God gives a faculty, which he always doth to those that seek it. Christ is a way—wherein “ The way-faring men, though fools, shall not err,” Isa. xxxv. 8. O learn this way ; you must travel it. How could it have been else, that so many plain illiterate men, such as the apostles were, should all on the sudden be such proficients in this learning ?

3. He is the lesson that few do learn : the more

is the pity. People are taken up with the study of other things, but make light of this learning, as of the gospel feast, Matt. xxii. 1—7. Matt. vii. 14.

4. He is the lesson that multitudes are damned eternally for not learning. If I should say it is the only damning sin, I could make it good from Scripture. Whatever we have done amiss, if we have learned Christ, it shall be forgiven: whatever good we have done, unless we have learned Christ, it will not be accepted. This will be the question,—Hath he learned Christ? Is he found in him? Rom. viii. 1. If children at school do not learn their lesson, there is but a rod to whip with; but if we do not learn Christ, there is a hell to burn us in.

5. He is a lesson that we must be sure to learn by heart, I mean, be hearty in learning, inward, sincere, upright, serious, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Rom. x. 10. Prov. xxiii. 26. If we learn Christ to talk of him only, and not to walk in him; to have him on the tip of our tongues, and not to lodge him in the secret chambers of our hearts, it will not do.

6. He is a lesson that is best learned upon our knees. When in a humble sense of our ignorance, blindness, darkness, dulness, we go to God, every day, for the unction, saying, Lord, teach me,—as David, up and down the 119th Ps. (he, *thy statutes*—we, thy Christ,) we learn best; we then make the best progress in this school, Ps. xxv. 9. Zech. iv. 5. 13.

7. He is a lesson that but one book is enough to teach us. Other learning is not had without abundance of books; philosophers, historians, physicians, lawyers, must have large libraries;

but one book alone well learned will suffice to make thee a Christian, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Then search the Scriptures, John v. 29. Prefer having eyes to read the Scriptures, and be blind to every thing else, than to read every thing else and neglect the Bible.

8. He is a lesson that it will do us abundance of good to learn. It is a useful lesson. All kinds of learning are in some way or other useful, but this learning excels them all, for it is profitable for all things.

It is unspeakably satisfying to the understanding part. The most learned, after all their inquiries into other learning, have professed themselves uneasy and dissatisfied, but this fills; as the great Mr. Selden,* when dying, said, he had rest no where but in Tit. ii. 11—14.

It is unspeakably sweet, and comfortable, and refreshing, and joyous; like honey and the honeycomb. Every word of God is so, Ps. xix. 10. but especially God the Word.—How sweet is it to a lost undone sinner, to be acquainted with a Saviour! Other learning increased, increases sorrow, Eccl. i. 18. but this doth not.

It is strangely renewing and changing within, in the inner man; making the tree good; bowing the will; raising the affections, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

It is strangely reforming and amending without—in the life and conversation.

There is no bridle like this to keep us from sin. When a temptation to sin comes, it says—No, I have not so learned Christ. I thank God, I am

* Called by Grotius the Glory of England. He died A. D. 1654.

better taught. There are other arguments on this head.

Is this thy kindness to thy friend?
It will be bitter in the end;
Thy vows, O God, upon me lie,
Should such an one as I am fly?

Was Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. Did he teach me to be proud, passionate, envious, drunken? No, I never learned that of him.

There is no spur like this to put us on duty.

He that hath learned Christ hath learned the example of Christ, learned him as a copy to write after. To learn Christ is to learn of Christ—"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," Matt. xi. 29. It is called his law, Gal. vi. 2.

He that hath learned Christ, hath learned the encouragements given by Christ in the promises.

9. He is a lesson that we can never be perfect at. He that hath learned it best, and learned most of it, must, after all, say there is more to be learned;—yet *ever learning*, 2 Tim. iii. 7. is true of this learning.—It is a bottomless ocean that we can never fathom; our finite understandings are not capable of reaching his infinite perfections, 1 Cor. viii. 2.

10. He is a lesson that when we have once learned we can never unlearn again. It is the better part, that can never, never be taken away, Luke x. 42. All other learning may be lost. Many a great scholar hath gone mopish. However, death dissolves it, melts it, it is gone like a snow ball in a thaw. It is a pity it should

be so, but so it is. But he that hath learned Christ, hath learned him for ever. Death robs him not of it, but perfects it, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

III. What inferences are to be deduced from hence ?

1. An inference of reproof to several sorts of persons.

(1.) To those that slight and despise this excellent lesson and learning, as if it were not worth the looking after. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." The blessed stoop to look into this depth, and is it below us ?

(2.) To those that have learned Christ in some good measure, but do not improve their learning—who do not improve it for their own furtherance in the ways of God and godliness ; that use it not as a bridle, a spur.—Nor for the instruction of others ; especially those under their charge. When Andrew had found Christ he called Peter, when Philip found him he called Nathaniel, John i. So should we ; not in pride and vain glory, but with an earnest concern that others may be acquainted with him.

2. An inference of comfort and encouragement to those that fall not justly under either of these reproofs—that prize this lesson, and are learning and improving it for their own and others' good. Go on and prosper ; the Lord is with you, "Your path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. There is a promise, Matt. xxv. 29. for your encouragement—"Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

3. An inference of exhortation to all.

By all means, whatever ye do, learn Christ.

Con this lesson; be conning it every day. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord," Hos. vi. 3. *Follow* on by daily prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, conference. When ye have it, it will make you rich amends—here and hereafter. Value that preaching best, that hath most of Christ in it. It is sad to see whole sermons printed, and Christ not once named in them. Is that preaching Christ? Paul could say, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Remember, ye are Christians. What! and not learn Christ?

Ye that are young. Now is your learning age; some of you are scholars—O learn Christ.

Ye that are old. There is yet a learning day. Nicodemus was old when he began.—Yea, all of you—learn Christ.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHRIST IS OUR LADDER.

And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. GEN. xxviii. 12.

THIS ladder which Jacob saw, was no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was, under that notion and resemblance, represented to him.

What else should it be? And a very clear notion it is, and very helpful to our understandings to apprehend what he is made of God unto us—*a ladder*.

Doctr. That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God unto us our ladder.

You all know what a ladder is, and what use it is for. Now just such a thing our Lord Jesus Christ is—*our ladder*; and of the same use he is to us spiritually, for the good of our poor souls.

But, says some one, it was only a dream.

I answer, It was a divine dream, sent of God; a vision, than which nothing can be more certain.

Show, I. The properties of this ladder.

II. Of what use it is to us.

III. The inferences.

I. I am to show the properties of this ladder.

It is a ladder in all respects extraordinary; there never was any other like it.

1. It is a living ladder. In the same sense in which, as a way, he is called a *new and living way*, Heb. x. 20. in the same sense, as a ladder, he is a *new and a living ladder*. Other ladders are dead things, but this ladder lives. It is true he was dead, but he is alive again, and lives for evermore, Rev. i. 18. And it is well for us that he is so; for if he live, then we shall live also.

2. A long ladder. The longest that ever was, for it reaches from earth to heaven. That was the posture in which Jacob saw it—*the foot upon the earth, and the top of it in heaven*. Hereby were signified his two natures;—his divine nature, as God; his human nature, as man. As man—

he was set upon the earth, a son of Adam, born of a woman, lived here upon the earth for a time, as other men do. As God—he was always in heaven, begotten of the Father before all worlds, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. The uniting of these two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, in one person, is the mystery of all mysteries, 1 Tim. iv. 16. That the glory of the Godhead did not destroy the meanness of the manhood, nor the meanness of the manhood debase the glory of the Godhead, is mysterious indeed.—The bush which Moses saw, burning and not consumed, was an emblem of this.

But what need was there that the foot of the ladder should be upon the earth—that our Redeemer should be man?

I reply, There was need, that he might have a body wherein to suffer and die; such a body as ours that had sinned, for whom he was to die.

But what necessity is there that the top of it should reach to heaven—that he should be God?

I answer, That the Godhead might give virtue and value to the sufferings of the manhood, and that he might support it under them—which else would have failed. Besides, to bring God and man together, it was requisite he should be both God and man; God—that he might deal with God, which man as man was not fit to do; man—that he might deal with man, which God as God, a holy God, could not do, without consuming him, a sinful creature; as a consuming fire, with stubble. Here is the meaning of his being *Emanuel*, God with us; God in our nature; which if he had not been he could not have been *Jesus*, a Saviour, Matt. i. 21—23.

Now our duty hereupon is,

(1.) To adore infinite love and infinite wisdom in the contrivance of this way, which no other could have found out ; saying, Lord, who is like unto thee ? And,

(2.) To say also—What shall we render ?

3. A lasting ladder. Other ladders wear out in process of time, and fail, and come to be good for nothing but the fire : says the workman, I dare not venture to climb it, I shall fall and break my bones, it is worm-eaten and rotten. There is no danger of that in this ladder, Heb. xiii. 8. The righteousness which is brought in by him is *everlasting* righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. All the saints from the beginning have made use of it, and it never yet did fail any, nor never will to the world's end. “ He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,” Heb. vii. 25.—to the *utmost* of times.

4. A free ladder, open and common to all ; whosoever will may come, and make use of it and welcome. If we do not by unbelief exclude ourselves, God hath no where excluded us. The promise runs in general terms, Isa. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37. Rev. xxii. 17. The fountain is *open*, not sealed, Zech. xiii. 1. Our Lord Jesus was born in an inn, which is free to all comers ;—died with his arms stretched out upon the cross, and was nailed so, to signify his readiness to embrace all that will come to him.

5. A firm ladder ; steady and strong. Our Redeemer is mighty, Heb. vii. 25—*able to save*. From what ? From our sins.

From the guilt of them : how many, how great, soever ; crimson, scarlet, guilt ; by the infinite merit of his blood and passion.

From the dominion and power of them, by his

Spirit and grace. Though the devil himself steps in to strengthen the snare he is able to burst and break it, and to set us free.—Therefore fear not, nor be dismayed; greater is he that is with us than he that is against us.

6. A ladder fitted every way for the use for which it was intended. But,

II. Of what use is it to us?

1. That by it blessings might descend from heaven unto us. If our Lord Jesus had not interposed by dying to make peace, this could not have been. Curses, wrath, light-bolts, thunderbolts, might have come down, and would have come, without this ladder; but, no blessing, no token for good, no beam of favour. There would have been fire and brimstone, as on Sodom.—The reason was, because man had sinned, and thereby God was provoked, and till divine justice was fully satisfied, mercy could do nothing. The way was blocked up. Now Christ comes, and by dying makes satisfaction, and so takes out of the way that that hindered, and now blessings are showered down of all sorts, temporal, spiritual, concerning the life that now is, and that which is to come. “God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus,” Phil. iv. 19.—not some, but *all*. And how? By Christ Jesus. He is the ladder by whom they descend, the conduit pipe for conveyance of all our fresh water from the fountain above to the cisterns below.

It is by this ladder—that all our pardons come. We are needing of them every day; give us this day—and forgive us this day; and we never have them but when we come for them in his

name. All the infinite mercy that is in God, did never forgive one sin out of Christ.

It is by this ladder—that all the grace and strength we have comes. Of this also we have daily need,—for doing duty, resisting temptations, bearing afflictions. It comes down to us by this ladder, therefore it is called the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, because we have it only by him, and from him, and through him, John i. 16.

It is by this ladder—that all the returns of prayer come in, John xvi. 23. We had lately a day of prayer, wherein special mercies were prayed for with reference to present affairs. Which way must those mercies come, think ye? Certainly, down this ladder.

2. That by it we may ascend from earth to heaven, and go to God.—From earth to heaven is a long way, and up hill too. There is no ladder from *hell* to heaven. Fly *it* we cannot, Luke xvi. 26. We have no wings for the purpose. But climb to heaven we may; and how, but by a ladder? Christ is that ladder.

By this ladder our performances must all ascend while we live; our prayers, and praises, and alms-deeds, our fastings, and humiliations. You would have them go to God, would you not? and be accepted of God, would you not? Then they must go by Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. He is the high priest, his intercession is the incense, Rev. viii. 3.

By this ladder our persons must ascend when we die, John xiv. 6. No man cometh to the Father, but by him, to the kingdom of the Father, the glory, presence, vision, fruition of God.

It was the merit of his death that purchased it for us; that is the price of it.

It is the working of his Spirit in us that fits us for it.

It is the efficacy of his prayer that brings us to it, John xvii. 24. We never begin to climb this ladder till converted, and then step by step; gradually is sin weakened, grace strengthened; not all at once.

III. What inferences arise hence?

The inferences shall be by way of answer to five questions.

1. If Christ be our ladder for us to ascend on, how is it then said here, that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending?

The ascending and descending of the angels of God upon this ladder, Christ, is for our good, benefit, and advantage. The angels are ministering spirits for us, Heb. i. 14. The design of the vision was to comfort Jacob at his entrance upon a perilous journey in his flight from his angry brother. It was a seasonable refreshing cordial, Ps. xci. 11, 12; xxxiv. 7. 2 Kings vi. 17.

But why ascending?

(1.) For fresh orders, to act for their good every day, Matt. xviii. 10. *their* angels; though nothing else be theirs, "their angels always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,"—expecting the least nod or beck.

(2.) To give account of their stewardship; what they have done. Allude to Luke xiv. 21. Read Job i. and Zech. 1.

(3.) With separate, departed souls in their arms, to place them in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22.

But why descending?

To execute their orders, for preservation, provision, society, supply.—Jacob was alone here,

he had no company. O how sweet is it to see both the ladder, and the travellers going up and down! Note, all are either ascending or descending, none standing still, none idle, all busy. This may comfort all the Lord's poor Jacobs in all their straits and troubles; not the Esaus, the wicked of the world; their attendants are ugly devils, living and dying.

2. If Jesus Christ be our ladder, what is faith?

The hand by which we take hold of the ladder.

The foot also, by which we come to it, and climb by it. As good then even no ladder as no hands and feet; as good there were no Christ as no faith, John viii. 24. an unbelieving soul is a maimed soul, handless and footless, and therefore helpless. Then be not faithless, but believing. Reach hither thy hand, as Christ said to Thomas, John xx. in a sight and sense of thy undone condition without him; receive the report of the gospel concerning him, his ability and willingness to save. Renounce all other ladders, and cleave to this alone; behold, he calls thee.

3. What are the rounds of this ladder?

The several particulars of his undertaking: steps downward first, and then upwards; on each of which there is matter for faith to fasten on,—his incarnation, temptation, passion, resurrection.

4. Is Christ alone the ladder? are there no other ladders but he?

No other: how should there be? Who are they? Who besides him hath his foot on earth, and his head in heaven? Name who.

The papists fancy other ladders to themselves; saints and angels; the Virgin Mary. Are these God? The angels ascend and descend upon the ladder; they are not the ladder.

‘But their end in ascending and descending is as mediators for us; they ascend with our prayers and descend with God’s answer.’

What Scripture is there for that? Where doth the word of God tell us so? If no where, there is no ground for faith, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin; nay, it says the contrary, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The protestant, pharisaical self-justiciaries make a ladder of their own righteousness. They hope to work out peace, and pardon, and salvation for themselves, by their own performances, as the poor carnal mistaken Jews of old did, Rom. x. 3. Paul disclaims this way to heaven, Phil. iii. 7, 8. How can we be a ladder to ourselves? Alas! the best of our doings are imperfect, and defiled. However, they are *duty*, therefore they cannot *merit* any thing. Say then, I beseech you, None but Christ.

5. Why is it said, *Behold* a ladder?

It is common both in the Old Testament and the New, when Christ is spoken of, to say, *Behold*, Isa. vii. 14; xlii. 1. John i. 29. This notes to us, what our duty is in reference to him.

We are to admire and wonder, as oft as we think of him, Isa. ix. 6. his name is wonderful. They do not know him, that do not wonder at him; at what he is, at what he hath done and suffered, at what he is doing, at his love and free grace especially.

Behold and bless God for making and rearing this ladder.

To behold him, is to believe in him, Isa. lxv. 1; xlv. 22—*Look unto me*, as the stung Israelites to the brazen serpent.

There are four special seasons wherein to behold this ladder :

(1.) When we are doing any thing for God, then behold it as the only way and means of being strengthened for it, and of being accepted in it.

(2.) When we have done any thing against God, when guilt stares us in the face, then behold it, as the only way and means of peace and pardon.

(3.) When distress, and trouble, and danger are before us, then behold it, and the angels ascending and descending on it.

(4.) When death is about to lay his cold hand upon us,—as Stephen, “ Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,” Acts vii. 56.



CHAPTER XXXV.

CHRIST IS THE TRUTH.

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John i. 17.

THERE are two Johns especially spoken of in the New Testament, John the Baptist, and John the divine. These words were spoken by the former, and recorded or written by the latter, *John bare witness of him*, that is, John the Baptist, his forerunner or harbinger, that was to him, as the morning star is to the sun, his messenger, to tell the

world that he was coming. And what was it that he bare witness to concerning him? This among the rest, that *grace and truth came by him*.

Two things are here opposed to *the law* that came by Moses.

Grace. It is elsewhere so opposed, Rom. vi. 14. "Not under the *law*, but under *grace*,"—where by law is commonly understood the Mosaical dispensation, the management whereof was in such a way, with so much terror, that it looked like as if it had been the first covenant of works; and some have so mistaken it to be, and called it so. Then by grace is meant the new covenant, called the covenant of grace, which it is a great privilege to be under. There is between this covenant and the other as much difference as between being under the cold, dark shades of the night, and the bright, warm, refreshing beams of the noon sun; between being in bondage and being at liberty. Now taking *grace* in this sense, it came by Jesus Christ, it is made in him, and by him, and through him. And, therefore, he is expressly called the covenant, Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 8. We should bless God for this grace, and take the comfort of it, and walk answerably to it not letting sin have dominion over us.

Truth.

DOCT. That truth came by Jesus Christ: it came when Jesus Christ came—when the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

He is *the truth*, John xiv. 6.—the way, *that* way;—the truth, that truth; *the* life, *that* life. There are many ways, and many truths, and many lives, or kinds of life, but Jesus Christ is most eminently and transcendently that way, truth, life: the true and living way, or the way

in which, the truth by and through which, we come to that life, which alone deserves the name of life, and that is, eternal life.

I shall, I. Explain what the truth is, and how the truth came by Jesus Christ. And,

II. Apply it.

I. Explain the subject.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was at Pilate's bar, John xviii. 37, 38. he said, "*For this cause* I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,"—to which Pilate replies by asking him a question—*What is truth?* and before he had his answer, went his way. It is a pity he had not staid; we had then known from the mouth of truth what is truth; but he went out. It is so with many people; they take on them as if they desired to know the truth, and to know their duty; but it is but a copy of their countenance, really they do not; as Balaam, Numb. xxii. There is one way of knowing what is truth, by the contraries. There are three things that are contrary to truth, by considering which, it may be known what truth is:

1. Figures, and shadows, and types are things contrary to truth. As suppose the picture or representation of a man; we do not say it is the true man; the *truth* is he that is represented by it. Now so the truth came by Jesus Christ; that is, all the figures, and types, and shadows of him whereby he was held forth to the fathers under the Old Testament, were all fulfilled in him, and therefore when he, *the truth*, the substance, was come, they were all to vanish away; and so they did, Heb. ix. 24—*the figures of the true*. For example,

Under the Old Testament they had manna—

little, round, and white—which came down in a dew every morning, and was their food for forty years. Here was a figure, a shadow.—Now the truth of this came by Jesus Christ; he is the true manna, John vi. 32.—the *true* bread.

They had a brazen serpent hung upon a pole, that whosoever had been stung, and did but look, was healed by virtue of God's ordinance.—Now when Christ came, the truth of this came. He is the true brazen serpent, John iii. 14, 15. The looking is by faith, Isa. xlv. 22.

They had a rock that followed them, and supplied them with water.—The truth of that rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4.

We read of a ladder that Jacob saw, the feet whereof was upon earth, the head in heaven.—The truth of that ladder was Christ.

We read of a ram that was brought to Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac.—The truth of that ram was Christ sacrificed for us and in our stead.

We read of a lamb that was slain at the pass-over, and the blood sprinkled, whereupon the destroying angel passed by.—That lamb was Christ, 1 Cor. v. 7.

We read of a high priest richly clothed, and bearing on his breast the names of the twelve tribes, and going into the holy of holies, and burning incense there.—The truth of this was Christ: and so of all the rest. Now to make more new significant ceremonies, is to intimate that Christ is not come.

2. Falsehood and error is contrary to truth. There is truth doctrinal, 2 Tim. ii. 18. Now this truth is but one; error is manifold. There are many errors, but only one truth, and that

one truth is Christ. When he came, the truth came.

A preacher of the truth came.

A witness of the truth came.

(1.) He preached the truth. All that he said in all his sermons, parables, discourses, disputations, was all true, as true as truth itself. He never broached, nor owned, nor patronized, any error; no, not any, not the least. Several great truths of grand importance he taught. As,

Concerning the design of the Father in sending him into the world, which was, to save the world, John iii. 16. He was the first that plainly and clearly revealed this. It was hid before, John i. 18.

Concerning the necessity of regeneration, John iii. 3, 5. Which of the prophets spake of such a thing as a new birth? They call for turning, amending—but he, of being born again.

Concerning spiritual worship, John iv 24. in spirit; in opposition to the Old Testament carnal way, by carnal ordinances. There is now an end put to those. The truth is come.

Concerning the process of the great judgment. Where have we such a manifestation of it, as that in Matt. xxv. 31—46. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the king-

dom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels ; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal. The judge himself tells us here, how, and in what manner, he will proceed.—Now we have great reason to bless God that the truth is come in this sense also. But,

(2.) He came a witness to the truth, John xviii. 37.

A witness is a martyr, and such was he: he sealed the truth with his blood. So have many others besides him, both preachers and others, but he led the van. We call Stephen the proto-martyr of the New Testament, Acts vii. No; Jesus Christ was the Proto-martyr of the New Testament. Therefore, none need to fear or be ashamed; their dear Lord went before them to martyrdom.

3. Falseness and unfaithfulness is contrary to truth. A man of truth is he,

(1.) That speaks the truth in his heart, Ps. xv.
2. He will not tell a lie for the sake of any one, nor for any worldly gain or advantage whatsoever. Such a man of truth was Jesus Christ; not only when in the pulpit, in his preaching; but in his ordinary converse. His word was not yea and nay, but his yea was yea, and his nay, nay.

(2.) That keeps covenant, and performs promise. This he doth. You may safely venture upon what he says in those scriptures, Matt. xi. 28. John vi. 37—"Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—And in any other, for in him all the promises are yea, and in him amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. Compare Rev. iii. 14. and read Ps. lxxxv. 10. He promised his disciples, when he went, he would come again; and did he not meet them in Galilee? Did he not send upon them his Spirit? He did so.

Is he not true also to his threatenings?

He is, certainly, except we repent. If we do,

he repents ; else not. See, as to Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 38. which came to pass.

(3.) That is just to all his relations, and discharges honestly all his undertakings, without failing in the least.—So did he, to his disciples, while with them, as their master ; so doth he to all his saints, as head, husband, father, brother, friend, king, captain. Then for his undertaking, he fulfilled it to the utmost. I mean, his great undertaking to redeem and save. He fulfilled it to the utmost, without flinching, or starting back, John xvii. 4. Did his Father contradict what he said ? No, he did not. And then, for all his other undertakings subordinate to this, he hath been, is, and will be, just and true to them ;—in hearing prayers, forgiving sins, supplying wants, subduing enemies.

II. The application.

Is Christ the truth ? When he came did the truth come ? Then what is our duty ? what doth this call for at our hands ?

1. We must *know* the truth, John viii. 31, 32. Be acquainted with it. It is a pity we should any of us be ignorant of it, not acquainted with it, personally acquainted. Do ye know Jesus Christ ? Have ye learned him ? O get to know him, it is life eternal, John xvii. 3. It will make you *free*, John viii. 32. free from a deal of bondage, and misery, and mistake, that poor ignorant souls are subject to. See Paul's resolution, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8. The way to know this truth is to search the Scriptures ; dig into them, John v. 39. Also pray much. Beg of God an enlightened mind.

2. We must *buy* the truth, buy it and not sell

it, Prov. xxiii. 23. Christ the truth is a jewel worth your dealing for. You may all have him, you cannot buy him at any rate too dear, though with the price of all you are, and have, and can do. He is the true treasure, Matt. xiii. 44—46.

3. We must *receive* the truth. This receiving act is it that makes the truth ours, John i. 12. Not only receive him in our understandings, by unfeigned assent, but into our wills and affections, into our hearts and souls, by unfeigned consent; as the wife receives the husband when she takes him to be her husband; the servant the master, Matt. xi. 29.

4. We must *rejoice* in the truth, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. This we cannot do till we know it, till we receive it. Hast thou received Christ Jesus the Lord? Then thou hast reason to rejoice in him, for if he be thine all is thine. We are told of a philosopher,* that having found out a mathematical demonstration, was so pleased that he ran about like a madman, crying, I have found it, I have found it. Much more may the upright soul, Phil. iii. 3. John i. 45.

5. We must *love* the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Zech. viii. 19. Truth is a thing peculiarly amiable; it hath a loveliness in it above and beyond all other things, especially this great truth, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15.—a truth worthy to be embraced with both arms.

6. We must *speak* the truth one to another, Eph. iv. 25. It is an abominable thing for those that call themselves the followers of Christ—the truth—to be found liars, Eph. iv. 15. Isa. lxiii. 8.

* Archimedes. He died about 203 years before the Christian era.

7. We must *worship* God in truth, John iv. 23, 24. "Let us draw near with a true heart," Heb. x. 22. That is, in sincerity and uprightness, not in guile and hypocrisy,—or in truth, that is, in Christ, as our only medium of worship—in his name.

8. We must *walk* in the truth, 3 John 3, 4. that is, in Christ Jesus, Col. ii. 6. Have ye received him as the truth? then walk in him as the truth;

By relying wholly and solely upon him, in the great business of your reconciliation and salvation, and in all your straits and troubles, Acts xxvii. 25.

By being in your measure like him, in word and deed; just and true, and fast and faithful, to God and man, Rev. ii. 10.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHRIST IS OUR TREASURE.

Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. Matt. xiii. 44.

By this *treasure* we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, the king of this *kingdom* here spoken of.

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our treasure.

He that hath found him, and hath him, may truly say he hath found treasure.

Show, I. What treasure is, and what it implies.

II. What kind of treasure Jesus Christ is ; and,

III. What use we are to make of it.

I. What is a treasure ?

In treasure two things are supposed :

The one : That the things be excellent and useful.

The other : That there be abundance of them ; else it cannot be said to be treasure.

The things must be such as are both excellent and useful ; things of worth and value. We do not reckon a heap of stones or dirt to be treasure. Treasure is of gold, or silver, or jewels ; either money or money's worth. In Jeremiah xli. 8. we read of *treasures of wheat and barley, and oil and honey* : though these are not gold and silver, yet they are things useful and necessary.

There must also be abundance of them. A little is not said to be treasure. No ; where there is treasure, there is a deal to be had of such things ; plenty of gold, variety of jewels, stores of wheat. And is not Christ treasure, then ? Are there not abundance of excellent useful things to be had with him ? Can you name any thing that is either truly excellent, or truly useful, that is not to be had with him, and that in abundance, full measure, pressed down and running over ? Col. i. 19.—*fulness—all fulness dwelling in him.*

1. Is he not the *Sun* of Righteousness ? Mal. iv. 2. the *light* of the world ? John viii. 12. As full as the sun is of light, and that is as full as it can hold ; so full, and infinitely more so, is Christ of righteousness and grace, and strength of Spirit, and merit ; which are excellent things, and I am

sure useful to us, for we are undone without them.

2. Is he not the *fountain* opened? Zech. xiii. 1. A fountain is not a cistern, though it is true a cistern may be full; yet there is a great deal of difference between a cistern full, and a fountain full. A cistern may be full, but it doth not run over; if it do there is nothing to supply it with more, as there is in a fountain. Empty a fountain as often as you will, it fills itself without pouring any thing into it; not so a cistern. Now Christ's fulness is a fountain-fulness, and we have need of such.

3. Is he not a *horn* of salvation? Luke i. 69. A horn signifies plenty. His salvation is plentiful salvation. He is able to save to the uttermost, Heb. vii. 25. And is not salvation an excellent useful thing? Is any thing more excellent, more useful? Especially spiritual salvation; to be saved from our sins, the guilt, the power of them:—eternal salvation, to be saved from the wrath to come, from hell, and damnation; to be instated in the heavenly inheritance? Of all this there is a horn, an abundance, with Jesus Christ for poor sinners. Therefore, we may well say of him, he is our treasure.—But,

II. What kind of treasure is the Lord Jesus Christ?

There are these properties of this treasure.

1. It is peculiar treasure. The great God hath such a saying concerning his people Israel, Ex. xix. 5. *Ye shall be a peculiar people.*—I am sure his people Israel may truly say so of him.—He is a peculiar treasure; that is,

He is treasure by itself; such treasure as hath none like it; a nonsuch treasure; a treasure be-

yond all other treasures. *The peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces*, which Solomon speaks of, Eccl. ii. 8. is not to be compared with this treasure. It is as far beyond it as gold is beyond dross, as pearls are beyond pebbles, as substance is beyond shadow.

He is the treasure of but a few. There are people that have worldly treasure, here and there one in a country ; there are few people that make Christ their treasure. The most despise and make light of him ; they mind him not. God's number is by far the smaller number. Many are called, but few chosen ; like the grape-gleanings of the vintage, or like the shaking of an olive tree. But

Those few that have him, have propriety in him, they may call him theirs. My beloved is *mine*—mine to all intents and purposes ; a *peculiar treasure unto me*. And this is indeed the sweet of it : “ Who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*; *my* beloved and *my* friend.”

2. Precious treasure.

Precious in himself ; of infinite worth and value. The pearl of price, v. 45. is Christ. His blood is precious, 1 Pet. i. 19. His promises are precious, 2 Pet. i. 4.

Precious in their account and esteem that have him, 1 Pet. ii. 7. They have precious thoughts of him, Ps. cxxxix. 20. They have let all go for him, as Paul, Phil. iii. 7, 8. “ What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ : yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win

Christ." This is the language of one that had found this treasure.

3. Unseen, hid treasure. Other treasures are visible, this invisible, out of sight, as believers and God's hidden ones are. So Christ is a believer's hidden one, Col. iii. 3. Manna that none knows but they themselves that have it, and not they themselves always. Mary, when Christ spake to her, thought it had been the gardener, John xx. 15.

4. Undeiled ; honestly come by. Other treasures are not so oftentimes ; they that have them scrape them together by fraud, violence, oppression. That which Solomon had, was in a great measure of that kind, as appears by what they told his son—Thy father made our yoke grievous. But those that have this treasure, Christ,

Have him by *free gift*, John iii. 16. He gave him for us, he gives him also to us. They have him

By *lawful purchase*. It is said here he *bought* it, v. 46.—not by paying a valuable consideration ; I do not say so ; it cannot be. Christ buys us so, but we do not buy him so. It is a purchase *without money and without price*, Isa. lv. 1.—by barter or exchange. We part with our sins, and we have a Saviour ; with our own righteousness, our rags, and have his righteousness, that white robe. Have ye been at this market ? Have ye made this bargain ?

5. It is enriching treasure. It cannot be but that he that hath worldly treasure must needs be a rich man. But he that hath this treasure—Christ, is made rich by it *towards God*, and that is the true riches ; that is to be rich indeed. A man may have treasure *for himself* ; such trea-

sure as the fool, Luke xii. 20. had in his barns, and not be rich *towards God*, in God's account and esteem; rich towards the world, and a beggar towards God. But if Jesus be thine, thou art rich towards God, God will own thee for a rich man; perhaps poor on earth, rich in heaven. O covet these riches. Get Christ to be thine, and thou hast enough.

6. It is enduring treasure. Other treasures are not so:

Sometimes they moulder away of themselves, Prov. xxiii. 5.

Other times they are spent by the owners.

Other times they are plundered and stolen by thieves.—But of either of these, there is no danger as to this treasure.

It hath no principle of corruption in itself.

They that have it shall not spend it; they may live upon it.

They that would cannot take it away. The hiding of it *in God*, speaks not only the secrecy, but also the safety, of it, John x. 28, 29. Luke x. 42. A good reason why we should each of us give all diligence to make it sure unto ourselves, Matt. vi. 19, 20.

III. What use is to be made of this subject?

1. If Christ be treasure, then what a condition are they in that are without him? They are in a poor beggarly condition, Rev. iii. 17. Worldly poverty nobody is fond of; it is a grief, a trouble, a shame, a disgrace, a burthen. They that are under it are weary of it, and fain they would, if they knew how, be delivered from it; but as to spiritual poverty, it is not so; quite otherwise. There is no evil in it, nothing felt from it. O be persuaded this day to change your mind herein.

Believe a poor soul that hath no spiritual riches, no Christ to make it rich towards God, to be in a far more miserable condition than the poorest beggar in the country, that hath not a rag on his back, nothing to eat, but what he wanders for, no bed to lie on, no place to hide his head in ; I say, far more miserable. For,

All this concerns the body only, which is but the shell of the man ; the other concerns the soul, the heaven-born soul.

All this concerns this life only, which is passing away, and will be gone shortly, and then in the grave the rich and the poor meet together ; there will be no difference between the dust of the one and the dust of the other. But spiritual poverty is the forerunner of eternal misery. The Christless poor here, that live and die so, must be miserable for ever.

All this may be, and yet the man may be in the love and favour of God ; his sins pardoned, his peace made ; as Lazarus, and many another. But if thy soul be Christless, thou art poor towards God. God is against thee, and all that is in God is against thee, though nothing appear. So it is—there is no middle state.

2. What is to be done that this treasure may be ours ?

What did this man do here in the text ?

He *found* it hid in the field. He hid it. He was glad he had found it. And, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Something like this is to be done by each of us that Christ may be ours.

(1.) We must find him where God hath hid him, and that is, in the field of the Scriptures. I mean we must mix faith with what God hath re-

vealed there concerning him ; his ability and willingness to save ; his suffering, dying, rising again, with the design thereof ; his many gracious invitations, encouraging promises, made to poor sinners to come to him ; to accept of him. This must be done with application to ourselves, as if our own names were found written therein. Have ye thus found Christ ? He bids us, John v. 39.—*search*. *Search* the Old Testament ; he is hid there, but by digging we may find him. Search the New Testament ; he is above ground there ; we are blind if we see him not. In this sense it is said concerning the strait gate, and narrow way, Few there be that find it ; and of the few that *find* it, fewer go in at the gate, and walk in the way ; so as to this treasure, not one in ten, twenty, or even a hundred, who read the Bible, find Christ in it, or desire to find him.

(2.) There should be joy at our thus finding him ; this was before making the bargain here. Have you ever seen, and understood, and been affected with, God's unspeakable mercy to you in affording you the field, the Scripture, wherein Christ is ? in casting your lot and portion within hearing of the joyful sound ? Have you said, Lord, how is it ? " All the people," on one occasion, " went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them," Neh. viii. 12. It cannot be but the joy must be greater afterwards, when the treasure is made ours ; but there is great joy even in this—that it is revealed to us.

(3.) We must hide it Not with the hiding of concealment, to conceal from others our having found it, lest they should put us by the purchase .

there is no danger of that ; there should rather be an inclination to the contrary, to proclaim it, as Andrew told Philip. Read John i. Hezekiah did ill to show his treasures, but we must show ours. We must hide it with the hiding of meditation and consideration, as David hid the word, Ps. cxix. 11—as Mary, Luke ii. 19. We must hide it as the woman hid the leaven in the batch, as the husbandman hides the seed by harrowing it, as the stomach hides the meat in order to the digesting of it. Have we ever done this by what we have read and heard out of the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ? Have we reflected afterwards, meditated on it, prayed over it? If not, do it yet. It is God's way, a special means that he hath appointed, and that he uses to bless.

(4.) We must sell all and buy it. Is Christ the truth? buy the truth. Is Christ the treasure? buy the treasure. There is no making him ours any other way.

Begging will not do ; we may beg long enough, unless we buy. Read Matt. xxv. Luke xiii.

Steal him we cannot. Some have been made rich that way ; but not with these riches, not towards God.

Borrowing will not do. The foolish virgins would have borrowed oil of the wise ; but not so.

It passes not by descent from father to son, as land doth to the heirs, or personal estate to the executors ; nothing of that here.

There is but one way, and that is by *buying* ; and the terms are here set down,—*selling all*.

What all?

(1.) All our sins, Ezek. xviii. 31. how beloved soever, Matt. v. 29, 38.

(2.) All our own righteousness, as to any hope

or expectation from the merit of them. We are more loth to part with this than the other, but it must be done, or we cannot possess the treasure.

(3.) All our worldly concerns, if God calls, Matt. x. 37. Now what say you to this? Are you sorrowful, as the young man? Matt. xix. 22. Or do you like the bargain, and will you strike hands this day? It is all trash that you are called to part with; you shall have treasure for it. Could I make you an offer, a real serious offer, of better clothes, instead of those poor ones you have; a better house, estate; you would be glad, and hearken to me, and thank me. But, alas! I fear I shall prevail with none of you to do this for your poor souls. O be persuaded, not almost, but altogether.

3. What must they do that have this treasure, that can say, upon good grounds, I have thus bought it?

There is cause why thou shouldst bless God, all the days of thy life, for enriching thee with this treasure.

Oppose the having of this to the want of all other worldly treasure, Phil. iv. 18.

Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also, Matt. vi. 21.—the thoughts, the affections.

Hold fast your treasure, Cant. iii. 4.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHRIST IS OUR TEMPLE.

And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.
Rev. xxi. 22.

THAT the Lamb here spoken of is our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no question ; but the doubt is, what we are to understand by the *city* here described, whereof the Lamb is the temple. The description of it begins at v. 10. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God : and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel : on the east three gates ; on the north three gates ; on the south three gates ; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth : and he measured the city

with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it." It cannot be understood literally; there never was and never will be such a city, literally taken, of gold, of pearls. All agree in that. It is therefore to be understood figuratively, and mystically, and spiritually. Something like it is said by the prophet Isaiah, *ch.* liv. 11, 12.

Now the query is, Whether it be meant of heaven, or of some future state of the church in this world, when Babylon shall be fallen, the Jews called, and all the kingdoms of the earth be the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

I think of both, and that neither is to be excluded, for as we say of grace and glory,—that grace is glory begun; and glory is grace perfected: so of this city we say,—it is begun on earth, finished in heaven. If I can prove it is not

to be understood of heaven *only*, that will serve my present purpose.

I prove it, 1. Because this city is the bride ; the Lamb's wife, *v. 9.* Now that is the church—not triumphant only, but militant.

2. Because it is the holy Jerusalem, *v. 10.* And is not the gospel church so, even in this world ; the Sion, the Israel, the Jerusalem of God ?

3. Because it is said to descend out of heaven, *v. 10.* therefore it is not heaven ; for heaven doth not descend out of heaven.

4. Because it is said, *The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it, v. 2. and the glory and honour of the nations, v. 26.* Now that cannot well be understood of heaven : therefore, of some future state in this world when religion shall be uppermost, and every thought brought into obedience. In like manner it may be queried, Whether Matt. xxiv. intend the destruction of Jerusalem, or the day of judgment. I think both.

This is the city ; but what churches are in it ? How many, and what are they called ? Hath this Jerusalem no temple ? Yes : *The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it : the Lord God and the Lamb,* that is, the Lord God which is the Lamb—as John xvii. 3—he is the temple.

This is true of heaven. There is no temple, no altar, there are no sacrifices, no ordinances, there ; God in Christ is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

It is true of all the future state of the churches, that there will be ordinances ; and so of their present state, there are ordinances,—the word,

sacraments, prayer ; but the Lamb is the temple, Christ the soul, of those ordinances.

Doctr. That the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the Lord God Almighty, is our temple, and is to be so more and more.

Show, I. The further meaning of this by way of explication.

II. The properties of this temple.

III. The use we are to make of it ; which is the application.

I. I shall further explain the subject.

Temple is a general word, and signifies a place of worship, whatever it is that is worshipped in it, 1 Cor. viii. 10.—an *idol's temple*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 7. Some think it were more proper to call our churches, or other places of meeting for divine worship, temples, rather than churches. But *the temple*, peculiarly so called, is the house or place of worship built at Jerusalem by king Solomon, whereof we read at large in 1 Kings vi. &c. It was one of the wonders of the world for state and magnificence. When it was burnt, another was built, in Ezra's time ; short of that in outward glory, but beyond it, in that it had Christ's personal presence, who taught in it, Hag. ii. Now when I say, Jesus Christ is our temple, I mean, that the temple of king Solomon was a type of Christ, it was one of the shadows by which Christ was signified. He is the substance. This will appear in the following particulars :

1. The temple was the place of the peculiar residence of God ; he dwelt there *between the cherubims*, 2 Chron. vi. 1, 2. There his *glory did shine forth*, it *filled the house*, 2 Chron. v. 14. It was called the *Shechinah*.—He was so

there, as he was no where else in the world besides. So Christ, he is the true temple, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9.—bodily—not in such a manner as in the temple, but bodily—in a way far beyond it.

His conception was by the power of the Holy Ghost over-shadowing the Virgin Mary, Luke i.

The name given him was Emanuel, God with us ; God in our nature ; he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6, 7. He was God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. If asked, What think ye of Christ ? who is he ? Say—God manifest in the flesh, God clothed with a body.

His endowments and perfections were all of them divine ; his wisdom, power, holiness, 1 Cor. i. 24. Col. ii. 3. What else was it but the power of God, that wrought all the miracles that were wrought by him, that raised not others only, but himself also, from the dead ? It was requisite it should be so ; both, that he might bear up under his sufferings, and to give virtue and value to them. If the fulness of the Godhead had not dwelt in him, he could not have been a Saviour for us. We should adore this wise contrivance.

2. The temple was the place of the people's peculiar recourse to God. If any of them had at any time any special business with him, thither they must come, to the temple ; and there he promised he would meet with them, and hear their prayers, and do for them as there should be occasion, 2 Chron. vii. 12—16. If they did not come to it, however, they must look towards it.—Now our temple is Christ. If you have

any of you, at any time, any thing to do with God, you must go to him in Christ. In Christ it is that he will meet with you : no otherwise.

If you have done amiss and would be pardoned it must be only in and by Jesus Christ ; all your repentings are nothing without him ; it is his blood alone that makes atonement, 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. In the temple was the altar.

If you have done well and would be accepted, it must be only in and by Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5. The Jews when they pray turn their faces towards Jerusalem to this day, because of the temple that was once there—as Daniel, Dan. vi. 10. Compare 1 Kings viii. 28. So must we towards Christ ; not the face of our bodies, no matter whether eastward or westward, but—the faces of our minds and souls, the face of our faith ; looking at him as our advocatè with the Father, as the great high priest of our profession, as our altar, our temple, our all. We do certainly lose our labour if we do otherwise.

II. What are the properties of this temple ?

1. It is the only temple. There is none other besides it. There were many synagogues, but only one temple ; “ so there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” 1 Tim. ii. 5. Saints and angels are no temples for us, no mediators for us. The one temple was to be to them their centre of unity, so should our one Christ be to us, Eph. iv. 4—6.

2. It is the ordained temple ; set apart and consecrated by God, in his decree and purpose from all eternity, to be so. “ For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath which was since the law,

maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. vii. 28. *consecrated*, Rom. iii. 25—*set forth*. This decree and purpose of his was declared and published in the fulness of time, to the end that all might take notice of it, especially when he raised Christ again from the dead, Ps. ii. 7, 8. He said to the Jews, *Destroy this temple*, and in three days I will raise it up, John ii. 19—meaning the temple of his body. This was the great sign of his divine commission, John ii. 18. He could give them no greater.

3. It is high and conspicuous, 1 Kings ix. 8. to be seen afar off. When he died he was lifted up upon the cross, John xii. 32, 33. When he went to heaven he ascended up on high. When he comes again, every eye shall see him. God hath not hid him from us, but laid him open to us, that whosoever will may come to him.—Cities of refuge were situate on the tops of hills. Christ is also high in place and pre-eminence.

4. It is holy, and beautiful, and glorious. The temple was called the beauty of holiness, Ps. xcvi. 9. To be sure Jesus Christ is so; absolutely, infinitely, eternally holy.

The temple of his body was holy, as it had no seeds of sickness in it, for we never read of any thing ailing him. So in him was no sin, no disorderly appetites, or desires, but all under rule. His eye was never guilty of one sinful glance; his tongue never spake one idle word. Grace was poured into his lips, Ps. xlv. 2. It was absolutely necessary it should be so, for he was to be an offering for sin, Heb. x. 10. And all offerings for sin were to be without blemish, Lev. xxii. 19, 20. Heb. vii. 26.

The temple of his human soul was holy. He received the Spirit without measure, was sanctified throughout. There was in him no defect, no darkness, no guile; all was pure, and holy, and without spot. He was so in all his faculties; his will was perfectly complying with the will of his Father.—It is not so with us. In the temple there was the holy place, and the most holy place, called the holy of holies. Our temple is all most holy, the holy of holies. None is holy as he is holy.

5. It is a living temple. Solomon's temple was a dead thing, made of dead materials, but our temple is a living temple.

Christ personal is so; he *was* dead but he is alive, and it is well for us that he is so.

Christ mystical is a living temple, that is, Christ considered in union with all true believers; he is a living foundation, and they are the living stones, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. And both together make a living house, Eph. ii. 20—22.

6. It is a lasting temple. Solomon's temple was long since laid waste; so was Ezra's temple, not one stone left upon another. But our temple abides for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. It is not a tabernacle to be taken down.

III. The improvement.

1. If Christ be our temple, then we should, upon all occasions, rejoice in him, and make our boast of him, The Jews did so of their temple, even to excess; though it was far short of ours, Jer. vii. 4. They would not endure to hear any one speak against it; this was their quarrel with Stephen—"This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place," Acts vi. 13, 14. with Paul, Acts xxi. 28. Nay, before

them, with our Lord Jesus himself, John ii. 19, 20. And have not we much more reason to carry it in like manner towards our temple, the blessed Jesus? Should we not boast of him, saying, with holy David, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! or with that other good man, None but Christ, none but Christ. This is one evidence of our being the circumcision, Phil. iii. 3. as Paul was, Phil. iii. 7, 8. Can we endure to hear him spoken against, his name dishonoured, his blood and wounds blasphemed, by hideous oaths? There are great outcries for the church, the church, but how few mind the temple, the temple, *this* temple. The less others do, the more let us.

2. Then it concerns us all to get into this temple; not to rest in the outer court of profession, but to press within the veil. The door into this temple is faith, Acts, xiv. 27. When we receive the Lord Jesus, as he is offered to us upon gospel terms, in the way of believing, we are brought into him, we have union with him. He becomes ours, we become his. Now inquire, I beseech you—Is this receiving work done? Are ye in Christ Jesus? If so, there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Joash was hid in the temple, and secured there, and so escaped, 2 Kings xi. 2. This temple of ours is a safe hiding place from guilt and wrath. It is our city of refuge. O refuse not this offer; say not, as Nehemiah, “Who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in,” Neh. vi. 11.

3. All the worship we perform to God every day, of what kind soever, must be in this temple.

If it be not temple worship, that is, if it be not offered up in the name of Jesus Christ, it is worth nothing.

We must go about in his strength, not in our own; for our strength is weakness, John xv. 5. Compare Phil. iv. 13. There were two pillars in the temple—Jachin and Boaz, 1 Kings vii. 21.

We must trust to his merit and mediation alone for acceptance. If we pray, whether in the closet alone, or in the family, or in the solemn assembly, it must be with an eye to Christ. Turn your faces towards this temple. If so, we have a promise, John xvi. 23. Else none. If so, we have an encouraging instance, Ps. xviii. 6. Else none.—It is said, Israel “hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples,” Hos. viii. 14. So of many—they have other confidences—their own merit.

4. Is Christ our temple? we must also reckon ourselves his temple, and carry it accordingly, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Even our very bodies, these poor, weak, frail bodies of ours, are dignified and honoured with that title, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Now temples must be kept for him whose temples they are, for his use and service. Then glorify God, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Temples must not be defiled, buyers and sellers must be whipped out of these temples, that is, the world, lust, sin. How angry was Nehemiah: “And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber,” Neh. xiii. 7, 8. We should do likewise: “Love

not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHRIST IS OUR ARK.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark. HEBREWS xi. 7.

THERE are three arks mentioned in the scripture, and they had all some reference to Jesus Christ.

1. Moses' ark, whereof we read in Exod. ii. 3. this was a basket or coracle made of bulrushes, by means whereof he escaped being drowned in the Egyptian river. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. In him we are saved from being drowned for ever in the infernal lake, which burns with fire and brimstone.

2. God's ark, whereof we read in Exod. xxv. 10. This was a chest or coffer of wood, covered with gold, wherein the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were kept; a sign or token of the special presence of God with that people. Where the ark went, God went. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. By him the law was perfectly kept for us; and if we have

him with us, we have God with us as a reconciled Father.

3. Noah's ark, whereof we read in Gen. vi. 14—16. This was a boat or ship, wherein Noah and his family were all saved when the world was drowned. And to this I especially refer, when I say, the Lord Jesus Christ is our ark. Of this the apostle here writes, giving us a short account of the story, how it was—*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.*

Doct. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our ark.

He is that to us, and to all true believers, that Noah's ark was to him, and to his family.

1. There are several things wherein they agree · and,

2. Several things wherein they differ.

For the first—They agree as follows :

1. Noah's ark was of God's directing and ordaining ; he both appointed that it should be made, and also gave particular instructions how he would have it made, Gen. vi. 14, &c. It was no invention of Noah's ; had not God himself spoken to him about it, it had never entered into either his head or heart. Now whose invention was the sending of Christ to redeem and save us, by suffering and dying for us ? Was it ours ? No ; our heavenly Father himself, in infinite wisdom, contrived it for us, Job xxxiii. 24. *I have found a ransom*, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20. I have found—he seems to glory in it as his own invention. The angels contrived it not for us, but the great God himself. And how should this affect our hearts with love and thankfulness. It did Noah's, no question, that He that contrived heaven and earth how they must be, and every

creature belonging thereunto, should so far debase himself, as to contrive a box for Noah, to save him in. Lord, what is man? Lord, what am I? might Noah say. And so must we. The first inventor of some rare device or engine, usually goes away with all the praise; every one commends him. Lo, here is a rare device indeed.

2. The appointing of the ark for Noah, was the result of the world's sin. If the world had not been so vile and wicked as it was, there had been no flood to drown it. If there had not been a flood, there had been no need of an ark to save Noah in. So here, if the first Adam had not sinned, the second Adam had not been revealed: he came to seek and to save that which was lost. If we had not been lost, he had never left the heavenly world. The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. One of the fathers calls the sin of Adam, *Felix culpa quæ talem meruit habere redemptorem*—*A happy fault which deserved to have such a Redeemer*. Not that we are, therefore, to think ever the better of sin, or to harbour a good thought towards it, or concerning it—either that or any other; no, but the worse. By the breadth of the plaster, you may judge of the length and breadth of the wound. It was a great debt that would not be paid without such a surety.

3. When the ark was ready prepared, Noah went not in of himself, till the Lord was pleased to come and call him, Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou*—and then he obeyed and went in, and the Lord shut him in. So here, though there be a Christ given of God to redeem and save, a ransom provided, yet none are actually redeemed and saved

by him, but those only to whom the Lord is pleased to give an effectual call, Rom. viii. 30. Till he says, Come, thou man, thou woman, thou by name, come thou into Christ, we never stir a foot towards him, John vi. 45. As it was with the Jews in Babylon, though a proclamation issued out, yet none moved but those "whose spirit God had raised to go up," Ezra i. 5. Or as with Lazarus, though the stone was rolled away, yet till Christ said, Come forth, he never stirred, Eph. ii. 1. Isa. lxxv. 1. Jesus saw Zaccheus, and invited himself to his house, before Zaccheus saw him, Luke xix. And have not we cause, as to ourselves, to adore the free grace of God? Then for shutting him in, that was also God's own act and deed, for his security and safety. He would not trust Noah to shut himself in. So, "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. Phil. i. 6. John x. 28, 29. Were our salvation in our own keeping we should certainly lose it, as Adam did; therefore, see that sweet promise, and be comforted in it, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

4. When God put Noah into the ark, and shut him in, he did not leave him destitute. No, he provided comfortably for him.

He had the divine presence. It is not, Go thou, but *Come* thou, implying that himself meant to go along with him, and to abide with him there, and to bear him company. All that God puts into Christ shall be sure of his blessed presence with them, at all times, and in all conditions, Isa. xxvi. 20. "*Come*, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." Perhaps alluding

to this very passage : "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," Isa. xliii. 2. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Is not this matter of comfort to a child of God ? It was so to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

He had the benefit of a window, Gen. vi. 16.

For the conveying of light into it, else it had been a dungeon to him, a coffin, a grave ; it had been called a darksome house. They that are in Christ are enlightened with heavenly light, Eph. v. 8. God opens the eyes of their minds. And,

For viewing the mighty works of God in the great waters, and the sad desolations made thereby upon the earth, especially the drowning of his obstinate neighbours, that would not be persuaded : now he might see them floating by thousands. It is good for those who are in the ark, Christ, to be often looking abroad, as through a window, into the perishing world, where they may see both matter of pity as to others ; and matter of praise as to themselves, John xiv. 22.

By that window it was that the dove went out, and by the same was taken in again with the olive-branch. They that are in Christ have a window open heavenwards, by which they send thither, in prayers and supplications and

by which they receive returns thence, in suitable supplies : that window is Christ himself.

He had food also convenient for him, Gen. vi. 21. The ship was sufficiently victualled for the voyage, though a year long. They that are in Christ, are certainly well provided for ; he himself is their meat and drink, meat indeed, and drink indeed. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," Ps. xxxiv. 10.

5. All the while Noah was in the ark, the ark, and he in it, were tossed to and fro with the winds and waves ; yet still, as the waters swelled and prevailed, the ark was lifted upwards towards heaven. The saints of God, in this world, are exposed to various trials, troubles, temptations, Isa. liv. 11.—*tossed with tempests* ;—the ship was so in which the disciples were, and yet Christ himself was with them in it. And as the ark lifted heavenward, so we should be elevated towards heaven, weaned from the world, and things below, raised upward to things above, in our thoughts, affections, desires, hopes, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. This benefit by their afflictions makes them say with David, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted," Ps. cxix. 71.

6. The ark was a means of safety and preservation to Noah. Nay, it alone was so, and there was no other. All that were in it escaped, all that were out of it perished, though they climbed up to the top of hills, and mountains, and high trees ; though they clung, as no question some did, to the sides of the ark, all would not do, they were fetched thence, and drowned notwithstanding. So here—there is no Saviour but Christ. Out of him there is no salvation ; in him there is no damnation, Acts iv. 12 ; xvi. 30, 31.

Rom. viii. 1. He is set forth, and there is no other, to be the propitiation for sin. There is only one Sun of righteousness. There was only one brazen serpent. There is only one mediator, one advocate. People may climb high in parts, gifts, profession, in freedom from common pollutions, in the performance of external duties ; but all will not do, unless they are in the ark, unless they are in Christ Jesus. They may cling to him by a temporary faith, but unless they are *in* him they will perish. It was, methinks, saddest of all with the carpenters, who helped to make the ark, to be shut out ;—so it will be for those preachers, who are the means of saving others, but are not saved themselves.

7. They that were saved in the ark of Noah, were but few, very few ; eight souls ; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their three wives. All the rest of mankind, men, women, and children, were all lost. In like manner, they that are in Christ are but a remnant, Matt. vii. 14. Not many are in him by external profession ; far the greater part of the world are Jews, Turks, heathens. Amongst those who are in him by external profession, very few are effectually called, are truly such as they profess to be. There are abundance of hypocrites. In the ark, of the eight, one was a Ham, whatever the four wives were. Among the twelve apostles, one was a Judas. In the destruction of Sodom, only Lot and his family escaped. Of six hundred thousand that came out of Egypt, but two entered the land of Canaan. This should be no offence to us, nor occasion of stumbling. It is better to be in the ark with a few, than to be drowned with the rest for company. Do not ye think so ? Would ye

not choose so? When the saved come all together, they will be a great many. Let there be one the more for thee this day, and another for thee. It is observable, these eight saved ones in the ark, were all of Noah's family, either born in it, or married into it. We have a saying, It is good to be akin to land. Say I, It is good to be akin to God's Noahs; their kindred often fare the better in this world for their sakes, and sometimes in the other world, Luke xix. Acts xvi. All the eternally saved are such, and only such, as are of Christ's family, married to him, born of him. He is no ark to others, as to their everlasting state. Should we not then forthwith flee into the ark?

For the second—They differ as follows:

1. The ark was a dead thing; made of dead materials, gopher-wood, pitched within and without, to hold out water; and when it had served that present occasion, what went with it we know not; probably it rotted and became worm's-meat, as other ships are used to do. But our ark is a living ark, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; an everlasting, ever-abiding Saviour.

2. The saved in Noah's ark were but eight, and all those eight were either men or women, not a child among them. But in Christ, our ark, though the saved are but few, they are many eights, and amongst them not only some of both sexes, male and female, but some of all ages, old, and young, and little children.

3. The saved in Noah's ark escaped a present temporal death only; they were not drowned in the flood of waters as their neighbours were;

I mean, the ark was no further instrumental of good to them. But the saved in Christ Jesus are saved by him from eternal misery, from the wrath that is to come, from being burned in hell for ever. As for death temporal, they have no exemption from it, of no kind, in no circumstances; they die suddenly, even as others, a violent death, even as others; but then let the kind and circumstances of their dying be what God pleases, they are safe beyond death. Lo, here is a nonesuch ark.

USE 1. To you that hear me this day, I have three things to beg of you, not for myself, but for your own souls; and they are the same three things that Noah is said here to have done, to *believe*, to *fear*, and to *prepare*.

(1.) To *believe*, not what I say, or what other men say, but what the great God says, who cannot lie. And what says he? He says there is another flood coming, another deluge; a great one at the end of time for certain; besides, other little ones, that may come, and how soon we know not.

He says there is an ark ready of his own preparing, and that ark is Christ, and whosoever will may come, and be saved by him. Do ye believe this? If not, ye make God a liar.

(2.) To *fear* and be afraid. Noah believed and feared. Why should not we? Fear what? The flood threatened, death, judgment, the wrath to come. Are not these things to be feared? Fear, lest you be found out of the ark; graceless, Christless, Heb. iv. 1. They that are in the ark, must not fear, Luke xii. 32. Others must. The men of the old world would neither believe nor fear, but went on; and what came of it? Did

they escape thereby? "The flood came and destroyed them all," Luke xvii. 26—30

We do believe, we do fear—Then,

(3.) *Prepare*—What? An ark? We do not need; God hath prepared one. But prepare, that is, make ready for this deluge, by getting into this ark of his preparing, renouncing all other. Accept of him, close with him, yield yourselves to him. Do it now, to-day, while it is called to-day. You may go into the ark, before ye stir hence to go homewards.

USE 2. A word to those of you that are in this ark.

Bless God; it is the mercy of mercies; let him have the glory. Do ye think Noah was not deeply affected—Why was I preserved and not such a neighbour? Gen. viii. 20.

Labour to walk answerable to the mercy:

Cheerfully—against base fears. If Christ be thine, come what will, thou art safe.

Fruitfully—in all holiness, and new obedience, as saved ones.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHRIST IS OUR ALTAR.

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. Heb. xiii. 10.

By this altar we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the Christians may say,

they have him, they have him as their *altar*. As for those that serve the tabernacle, that is, the obstinate wicked Jews, that would adhere to Moses, and retain still the ceremonial law, and the worship, and the carnal ordinances thereof, either entirely alone, and by itself, or in conjunction with gospel institutions, they have nothing to do with him, no right to eat of him, that is, to partake of gospel privileges by him.

Doct. That the Lord Jesus Christ is our altar ; he is made of God to be so unto us ; we are to call him by that name, and to own him as such.

Show, I. What kind of thing an altar is, and what use it was for, and that Jesus Christ is of the same use to us spiritually.

II. What are the peculiar properties of this altar, which distinguish it from all other ordinances.

III. The application.

I. I am to show what an altar was, and that the Lord Jesus is, spiritually, of the same use to us.

An altar was like a square table, bigger or less, according as it was made, to be used in worship. There were altars of remembrance, Ex. xvii. Josh. xxii. We read of altars which the heathen had, and made use of in the worship of their idol gods ; and of altars used in the worship of the true God, Jehovah, blessed for ever.

The altars made use of in the worship of the true God, were either occasional, or fixed.

The occasional altars were such as were suddenly made, upon some particular occasion ; and when that occasion was over, we hear no more of them. Such was that which Noah reared when he came out of the ark. The first we read

of is in Gen. viii. 20. Abraham also, and Isaac, and Jacob, did all rear altars, in the several places to which they came in their travels, Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 18; xxvi. 25; xxxv. 6, 7. Still where they had a tent, God had an altar, which we bring as an instance of the antiquity of family worship—Among God's people, there were family altars.

The fixed altars were those that were made afterwards by God's own appointment; two by Moses, belonging to the tabernacle, and two by Solomon, belonging to the temple: both for the same purpose, only Solomon's were larger than those that Moses made, because in Moses' time the people of God were low and poor, and in straits in the wilderness, but in Solomon's time, rich and full, and much more numerous. Our altars should be as our circumstances are. The same measure of service will not suffice when we are increased and advanced by God, that might when we were low and poor. Of those to whom much is given, more is required. See the different sizes, in Ex. xxvii. 1. Compare it with 2 Chron. iv. 1. The one was five, the other twenty, cubits square.

These fixed altars, both in Moses' time, and Solomon's time, were two, of different materials, and for different use, and diversely placed.

There was one made of wood covered with brass, to burn the beasts upon that were offered in sacrifice to God, which stood without doors in the courts.

There was another made of wood too, but covered with gold to burn incense upon, which stood within in the holy place. Now which of these 's Christ; that is, by which of them was

he typified and his undertaking for us represented, as our Redeemer and Saviour? By both. He is our alone altar; himself alone is that to us which both these altars were to them.

1. He is our altar for sacrifice. In his dying for us, he offered himself upon himself; he was himself the priest and the altar. There must be a sacrifice offered, or else no atonement. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, &c. would not do: then said he, Lo, I come, Ps. xl. 6, 7. The Son of God himself must be the sacrifice, no other could do. But who will be the priest then, where is one sufficient to manage this sacrifice? Priests were to be *mighty men of valour*. I will be priest myself, said he; and it was so. But where will an altar be had for the purpose, sufficient to bear the weight of this sacrifice? I myself, said he, will be the altar too; and he was so;—sacrifice, priest, and altar, Heb. ix. 14. Now this altar for sacrifice is to be considered,

(1.) In the matter of it. That was wood, covered with brass. Not wood outermost, for the fire would have burnt it, but wood within; brass without signifying the two natures of Christ, his divine nature, and his human nature. The brass of the divine nature secured and safeguarded the wood of the human nature, else the fire of God's wrath had consumed it; and if so, no atonement could have been made. This was the *eternal Spirit, through which HE offered himself without spot to God*, Heb. ix. 14.

(2.) In the figure and form of it. It was exactly four-square, as broad as it was long, and as long as it was broad. By whose order was this? Who appointed it so? The great God himself. This signified the stability and permanency of his

undertaking ; the square figure is steadfast and stable ; *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8.—a sure foundation.

(3.) In the placing of it. It stood without, in the outward court ; noting the sufferings of Christ to be here below in this world. Here it was that he gave himself to death, even the death of the cross. Or else, noting the particular place of his dying, which was without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12. Now this altar, and this sacrifice on it, is all the hope we have for reconciliation with God. He alone is our propitiation, 1 John ii. 2. God hath *set him forth* to be so, Rom. iii. 25. And, therefore, to him we must betake ourselves, upon all occasions, trusting to his merit and righteousness alone for peace and pardon : it is impossible we should have it any other way.

2. He is our altar also for incense, in his interceding for us. Note—

The matter of it—wood covered with gold ; not with brass as the other, but with gold, pure gold—signifying the two natures of Christ, in both which he makes intercession, as God-man ; hence with authority,—“ *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory,*” John xvii. 24.

Note—He is now a golden Christ, a glorified Redeemer. Heaven makes all gold that comes thither. There was a crown over the altar of incense. Observe,

The form of it : this as the other was four-square, Heb. vii. 25. “He ever liveth to make intercession.” Compare Ex. iii. 2. Notice also,

The place of it, *within*, not without ; in heaven, not on earth ; in God’s immediate presence

before the mercy-seat. There it is that his blood cries, and his merits cry—not from the ground, as Abel's, Heb. xii. not in humiliation but in exaltation, Zech. vi. 13. Hence we may take occasion,

(1.) To adore the infinite wisdom and free grace of God the Father, in contriving such a way of redemption for us, and in performing that contrivance. He himself appointed the altar; he himself appointed the Saviour, 1 Cor. i. 30. *"Made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."*

(2.) To examine ourselves, what interest we have in this oblation, in this intercession, in this double altar. Is it ours? Can we say we have an altar? The way to know it is by inquiring what use we make of it. They only have interest in it that make use of it every day, in every thing,—for pardon for what we do amiss, for acceptance of what we do well. Many have none, nor desire none. Many have such as they should not; "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty; he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images," Hos. x. 1, 2. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing," Hos. viii. 12.

(3.) To exhort, by all means, to acquaint yourselves with this altar; to know Christ Jesus the Lord, as your only atonement, and only advocate; to fly to him as such, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Further, concerning these altars, note,

1. It is said of each of them, They had four horns, one at each corner—for ornament, and for use.

The use was double. *To bind the sacrifice to.* The beast, from a principle of self-preservation, was loth to die; they were forced to bind him, Ps. cxviii. 27. There was no need of cords to bind the blessed Jesus; he gave himself, *I am he.* That which bound him was his Father's will and his own inclination, his love to poor sinners. The call is to us, to bind all our sacrifices to the horns of this altar. So we must, or there will be no acceptance, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

For guilty malefactors to take hold of: as Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28. Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 50, 51. When we have sinned, what else have we to take hold of? He alone is our city of refuge. The horns were four, pointing to the four corners of the world, east, west, north, and south. Our Lord Jesus is a universal Saviour, to all nations and people. Whosoever will may come, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. There are no rails about this altar.

2. It is said, the *altar did sanctify the gift*, Matt. xxiii. 19.

How sanctify it?

By being offered there in due circumstances, by a right priest, in a right manner; the gift received a kind of adherent holiness from the altar. Whereas before it was a common beast, like the rest of the flock or fold; now it became hallowed, it had a peculiar worth and value put upon it. The Lord did own it as his, and accept of it for atonement. So Christ, by his merit and mediation, sanctifies all our gifts, puts a worth and value on them before God. As they come from

us they are worth nothing, Eph. i. 6. Therefore, in all our performances, as we must look to him as our alone temple, so we must present all upon him as our alone altar, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15. The voice from heaven testified, Matt. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5. "*In whom*"—not only *with* whom—"I am well pleased."

3. They that served at the altar did eat of the altar ;—*others have no right to eat*. But we have ; we that hold fast our profession steadfast. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 13 ; x. 18. When a beast was offered, unless it were a burnt-offering, wherein God had all, God had one part, the priests another, and the offerer another. Some think they are called peace-offerings because all these three did agree peaceably so to divide.

The offerer with his part did make a feast for his friends, and they did eat together.

The priest with his part maintained his family.

God's part was burnt upon the altar.

Now our altar is Christ : the same is also our sacrifice. Of him we have all a right to eat, and may each of us take our part in him, and be refreshed and nourished by him if we will. But multitudes will not eat, that is, will not believe in him ; for eating is believing, John vi. 53, 54. By faith we make his death, and sufferings, and resurrection, and intercession our own, applying it to ourselves as we do the meat when we eat it. To this we invite all, but most make excuses, Matt. xxii. O, be yet persuaded. Consider, all other things are not food for you, Isa. lv. 1, 2. This is excellent food, none in the world fare better, than those that eat of this altar. It is most excellent fare, and great plenty of it. This is true also of the Lord's supper, in the nature and

design of it; it is a feast upon a sacrifice. Christ is not sacrificed there, as the papists say, who therefore call it the sacrament of the altar, and him a proper priest that administers it. He was sacrificed once for all; (awhile ago, to symbolize with them, some would needs have the communion table in churches set altar-wise;) but there he feasts his family and friends upon the sacrifice, that is, his body and blood, and they are welcome, Cant. v. 1. But multitudes refuse to be his guests. They choose rather to serve the tabernacle, nay worse, to serve their sins, their humours, their prejudices. They will repent it one day.—The Jews prefer Moses, therefore as yet they have no right to eat.—As the uncircumcised had no right to the passover, so the unbaptized have none to the supper.

II. What are the peculiar properties of this altar?

1. It is the alone altar; besides it there is no other. Saints and angels are no altars for us; our own righteousness is not; nay, God's mercy, out of Christ, is not. None but Christ, none but Christ.

2. It is the appointed altar, appointed of the Father. He reared it, therefore there is ground of hope that he will accept us, if we come to him in this way, which is his own way.—Jeroboam's altar and Ahaz's altar were their own, not God's, therefore they were rejected.

3. It is a living altar. Other altars, as temples, were dead things, made of dead materials; but this lives, and lives for ever.

4. It is a lasting altar; after it there is to be no other. It needs no repairing, as other altars do.

III. The application.

Exhortation to all; to renounce all other, and to make Christ alone your altar, that is, in all your addresses to God to look at him alone for acceptance, Col. iii. 17. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months," Rev. xi. 1, 2. Bishop Usher* expounds this of two sorts of people bearing the Christian name. Some that worship in the outer court. And some in the temple; at the altar: that is, some in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus; others, in a formal, slighty, Christless way.—These are left out, to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles; others are measured, to be the Lord's marked, sealed, saved remnant.—O then see to this.

* This illustrious prelate was promoted to a bishopric in 1620, and in 1625 was made Archbishop of Armagh. He died in 1655.

CHAPTER XL.

CHRIST IS OUR ALL.

But Christ is all, and in all. Col. iii. 11.
latter part.

You have had an account of thirty-nine things, which Jesus Christ is made of God to us—foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness, light, life, peace, passover, portion, propitiation, freedom, fountain, wisdom, way, ensign, example, door, dew, sun, shield, strength, song, horn, honour, sanctification, supply, resurrection, redemption, lesson, ladder, truth, treasure, temple, ark, and altar. Now, to what purpose is it to multiply more particulars? I am this day, from this text, to show you, he is our *all*; or, as the apostle expresses it, our *all in all*. Twice, and but twice, is this phrase found in all the Bible; here, and in 1 Cor. xv. 28. Here, it is spoken of Christ, what he is in this world; there, of God the Father, what he will be to us in the other world,—our complete happiness alone, without any other person or thing to help.—And the one follows upon the other. If Christ be *all in all* with us now, the Father will be *all in all* to us to eternity;—else not.

Doct. That Jesus Christ is a Christian's all,
or, his all in all.

There are two other Scripture phrases to the same purpose,—*The root of the matter*, Job xix.

23. and *The one thing needful*, Luke x. 42. He alone is sufficient, himself without any other, to make us happy, and without him nothing else can do it.

What is a sick man's all in all ? A physician.—A condemned man's ? A pardon.—A captive's ? A ransom.—A hungry man's ? Food.—A thirsty man's ? Drink.—A man's in debt ? A surety.—This, in all respects, is our condition, and all this he is to us.

Show, I. Wherein Jesus Christ is all in all.

II. What we learn from it.

I. Wherein is the Lord Jesus Christ all in all ? He is so to all persons—whether Jew, Greek, Barbarian ; no advantage, no disadvantage. Are they in Christ, learned or unlearned, it is all alike. And he is so in all things.

1. In respect of the benefits we receive from him, and by him, and through him.

(1.) Jesus Christ is all in all in *election*, Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us *in him*, in him as our *head*. The free grace and love of God is the head of election. God did, therefore, choose us, because he did love us ; and he did therefore love us, because he would love us. No other reason can be given, John iii. 16. Deut. vii. 7, 8. But the head of the elect is Christ. God the Father gave them to him to be his body, and him to them to be their head. But for him, and his undertaking for us, there had been no such thing as electing of us.

We are *chosen* to be *conformed to him*, Rom. viii. 29. that being made partakers of his image and likeness, we might be loved of the Father. There is reason, therefore, to love him above all.

(2.) He is all in all in *creation*. But for him the

world had never been; we ourselves had never been. We owe our being to him, John i. 3. Heb. i. 2. Young men are exhorted, Eccl. xii. 1. to remember their *Creator*—their Creator is Jesus Christ. We are all exhorted, 1 Pet. iv. 19. to commit our souls to him as unto a faithful Creator. Having made them, he will look after them.

(3.) He is all in all in providences; universal, to all; special, to his church; particular, to ourselves, John v. 22. He alone hath the ordering of all events that are concerning us. What pleases him, that he doth. If he be for us, it matters not who is against us.

(4.) He is all in all in redemption. He alone is the Redeemer, and there is no other but he; he paid the price alone; there are no joint purchasers with him, for the satisfying of God's justice. He fought the field alone with the devil, whose captives we were, and by destroying him, he rescued us, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(5.) He is all in all in conversion. When the fulness of time is come that a poor soul is to be brought home to God, whose work is it, who manages it? Not the man himself for himself. How should he? He is dead in trespasses and sins. Not the minister; he is the tool, the instrument, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. It is only the blessed Jesus, by his Holy Spirit. He is all in all in the work of conviction, and illumination, and humiliation; he opens the eyes, and he softens the heart, taking the stone away, and turning it into flesh.

(6.) He is all in all in justification. Who was ever justified without him? His righteousness is it alone wherein we appear before God—are acquitted, accepted. There is not a sin pardoned but for his merit's sake. His name is the

Lord *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30—he is made *righteousness*. The quarrel between us and God is taken up by him alone; he is our peace, and he our propitiation, and he our advocate, 1 John ii. 2.

Sure, faith is all in all, Rom. v. 1.

If there were no Christ, there would be no faith.

(7.) He is all in all in consolation. The Spirit, who is the comforter, is of his sending, John xiv. 16—18. And how doth the Spirit comfort, but by telling the soul that Christ is ours? Say that, and you say enough.

(8.) He is all in all in preservation, Jude 1. We are not our own preservers, neither do we preserve one another. He alone keeps us, *keeps us from falling*, Jude 24. from falling away; from being tempted, from being overcome by temptation. Peter's faith had certainly failed but for his praying for him, Luke xxii. 30, 31.

(9.) He is all in all for teaching. He is the best teacher, John iii. 2. Matt. xi. 29.

(10.) He is all in all for strength. If he be our arm, for doing—our back, for bearing—we can do, we can bear, all things.

(11.) He is all in all at death. There is no dying safely without him, without an interest in him. We shall certainly perish in that Jordan if he do not part the waters, and make a lane for us to go through, Ps. xxiii. 4. Never fear to look death in the face, if Christ be thine. There is no dying comfortably without him. It is he alone that takes the sting out, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. This is the cordial of cordials in a dying hour. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John i. 7.) says one good man; "There

is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 1.) says another. Even those that will not own him for their all in all living, will acknowledge him so dying: then, None but Christ, none but Christ.

(12.) He will be all in all at judgment. That is all in all to a man then, that will appear for him, and plead his cause, and bring him off. Now, that the blessed Jesus doth for those who are his.

He is the judge; the absolution must come out of his mouth.

He is the advocate to plead on our behalf.—This is one of those for whom I shed my blood; he hath loved me and owned me, and now I will love him, and own him.

He is our plea also; our best plea, our only plea. What canst thou say, sinner, why sentence of condemnation should not pass upon thee? This I have to say, Christ hath died for me, yea, rather, is risen again. But so will every one say: what proof is there of this? I have accepted of him, believed in him, yielded myself to him, so have not others. Now if this must be our plea then, let it be our plea now, renouncing all others.

(13.) He will be all in all to eternity. What is the heaven of heaven but to be with Jesus? Phil. i. 33.—in the vision and fruition of him, to behold his glory, and to partake with him in it? For this he prayed, John xvii. 24. As if he himself could not be well there without us. To be sure we cannot without him.

2. In respect of duty to be done to him. As he alone is our Alpha, the beginning, the first,

from whom all comes ; so he alone is our Omega, the last, to whom all tends.

(1.) He is all in all to be known. Paul thought him so, and tells us as much for our imitation, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8—10. The understanding part of a man can find no solid satisfaction in the study of any thing else without him, but in him it is abundantly to be found.

“Si Christum nosis, satis est si cætera nosis.
Si Christum nosis, nihil est si cætera nosis.”*

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” Col. ii. 3. that is, not only as the subject, with whom it is, but as the object, about whom it is, conversant.

(2.) He is all in all to be chosen. He is not only the truest truth, but the best good. Nothing we can name is so worthy of our choice as he is. Creatures are, all of them, jointly and severally, but partial good : each one of them good for some one thing and no more ; food will not clothe us ; clothes will not feed us ; but, lo, here is a universal good, good for every thing. Is not this the Christ ? All in all for food ; all in all for clothing.

(3.) He is all in all to be loved. It is one of the titles that the spouse gives him in the book of Canticles, *ch. i. 7. O thou whom my soul loveth !* and David, Ps. lxxiii. 25. There are many persons and many things that our love is closing with, and running out upon, but I dare say none of them all deserves it as the blessed Jesus doth.

* If you know Christ, it is enough, if you are ignorant of other things.—If you are unacquainted with Christ, it is nothing if you know every thing else.

There is no danger of thy over-loving him.— Love him with all thy heart, soul, mind, might, and he deserves it, both upon the account of his loveliness in himself, and his lovingness to us, Ps. xlv. 2. 1 John iv. 19.

(4.) He is all in all to be desired. It is one of the names given him, The desire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7. that is, worthy to be desired by all ; though actually desired but by very few. What say ye brethren, is your desire towards him? But what kind of desire is it? Warm desire ; hearty, lively desire ; like that of the hunted stag after the water-brooks, or the gaping earth after the rain? Can ye say, with the church, “ The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee?” Isa. xxvi. 8. There is good reason why it should be so.

(5.) He is all in all to be delighted in, Phil. iii. 3. He is to be made our song, the head, the gladness, of our joy. Rejoice we may in the good things that God gives us ; he is angry if we do not, Deut. xxviii. 47. but it must be with trembling, Ps. ii. 11. There is no trembling required here ; we may let forth the utmost strength of our souls when we are solacing ourselves in him.

(6.) He is all in all to be trusted. As the strength of joy may be laid out on him, so the strength of faith and hope ; and therefore of joy, because of faith and hope. He never failed any that put their trust in him, for he is faithful and true ; in him all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. He is all in all in the promises. Take any one, either concerning the life that now is, or that which is to come, and

act faith upon it, according as it is, and try if it do not prove as I say.

(7.) He is all in all to be thought on. He is the most excellent, lovely, amiable, sweet, comfortable object that our thoughts can possibly expatiate upon. "How precious," says the psalmist, "are thy thoughts unto me, O God," Ps. cxxxix. 17. The covetous man's money is all in all with him, to employ his thoughts about; the ambitious man's honour, and the sweet of it, as Haman; and the voluptuous man's sports and recreations; but the godly man says of Christ—He is my all in all.

(8.) He is all in all to be followed, as our pattern for imitation. We have before us a whole cloud of witnesses, but none like Christ, to be absolutely rested in, as a pattern, and sampler.

He is a copy without a blot, Eph. v. 1, 2. Heb. xii. 2.

(9.) He is all in all to be preached, 2 Cor. iv. 5. And certainly it is the best preaching, the most affecting, the most edifying, the most saving. To read or hear a sermon, by a Christian minister, before a Christian congregation, and Christ not once named from the beginning to the end, how absurd is it! And yet too many such there are! Tell it not in Gath. How unlike herein to blessed Paul, who did breathe Christ in all his sermons.

(10.) He is all in all in the Scriptures. When you take your Bible in hand to read a chapter, and have read it, reflect when you have done; and say, What is there of Christ here? He is the treasure in that field, the marrow in that bone, the manna in that dew, the diamond in that ring, the milk in that breast, John v. 39.

(11.) He is all in all in the sacraments. What is baptism without Christ? An insignificant ceremony; a laver without water. His blood for justification, and his Spirit for sanctification, are the main in that ordinance, 1 Pet. iii. 21. What is the Lord's supper without Christ? A table without meat, or drink. O take heed of Christless sacraments; not only the bread of the Lord, but the Lord the bread, should we press after.

(12.) He is all in all in Sabbaths. The day is his, it bears his name; and yet how many come and go, and Christ is not once thought of.

(13.) He is all in all in praying. A Christless prayer is of as little worth as any of the other. As when we pray in our own strength, and not by the help of the Spirit of the Son;—and when we rely upon any thing but him, and his merit and mediation; either for acceptance, or an answer.

II. What improvement are we to make of this subject?

1. For discovery. Here is a mark whereby to try ourselves—What think ye of Christ?

2. For reproof and admonition—to those to whom Jesus Christ is nothing at all.

3. For exhortation to all—to learn him—to live on him.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHRIST IS OUR ALL.—(*Continued.*)

Christ is all, and in all. Col. iii. 11. latter part.

THE improvement we are to make, by way of inference from all that hath been said, is this :

I. It should put us upon solemn and serious self-examination. And I am glad it proves to be a sacrament day, because of the suitableness of that duty by way of preparation for that ordinance, 1 Cor. xi. 28. I hope you have done it already, for fear of the worst : if not, do it yet. For this once, shall *I* do it ? Shall *I* put the question, and will you make the answer ? not outwardly, with the voice, but inwardly, in your own consciences, as before the Lord. We shall be examined for certain shortly, in another manner, by another examiner. Doing it well now may prevent doing it then, for “if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,” 1 Cor. xi. 31. The thing to be inquired after is,—Whether Jesus Christ be our all or no, our all in all ? Would you know ? Look within. Inquire,

1. Have ye renounced all other things for your all, and have ye received him to be your all ? This must be ; God hath so ordered it. The terms are so laid ; there is no remedy. If we look for any other we must seek another gospel. Now,

Is the renouncing act done ? Have ye seen

every thing else, besides Christ, to be so far from being likely to make an all for you, that it is even just nothing at all? and, therefore, have ye disowned, disclaimed it, saying, This is no portion for me, no propitiation for me, and so of the rest? Three things are to be thus renounced—the devil, the world, and the flesh; likewise, our sins—our own righteousness—and all our worldly possession. Away with them. Two of these, the two first, God doth call for; and the third we must be willing to part with, if he *should*; else, how can Christ be said to be our all?

Is the receiving act done? Have ye heartily closed with the gospel offer, and taken Christ as your all? I do not mean in word and tongue only, for that will not do, but in deed and truth, inwardly, heartily? The hand is faith, John i. 12. I do not ask whether it were not a trembling hand, whether it were not done with some difficulty, as a thing against the grain; but whether it be *done*, really and truly done?

2. It may be known by the value we put upon him, and by the daily use we make of him.

That which is our all we esteem and prize above any thing else, let it be what it will. It is uppermost with us; it hath the pre-eminence. Now what say ye, brethren? Is Christ uppermost with you? Hath he in all things the pre-eminence? Col. i. 18. I have often showed you there is reason he should. He best deserves it, Ps. xlv. 2. It is the Father's will he should have it, John v. 23. And, if he shall not be uppermost, he will be nothing. Either he will be in the throne or not at all. It is said there was a motion made in the senate at Rome, that Jesus Christ might be taken in among the rest of their

gods ; answer was made, No : because if he were one he must be all ; they must put away all the rest ; he would be partner with none of them. The poor, low, mean thoughts that many people have of Christ, is a clear argument that he is far from being their all ; they heed him not, neither his friendship nor his fellowship.

That which is our all we make use of daily, upon all occasions wherein it may be advantageous to us. A potion, a balsam, a friend, we so use. If we want any thing, our trust is to it, our reliance is on it. Now is Christ made use of by us daily, as our foundation to build on, our food to feed on, our refuge to flee to, our righteousness to rest in, our wisdom to guide us, our way to walk in, our lesson to learn, our ladder to climb by, our temple to look towards when we pray, our treasure to have recourse to when we want any thing, our ark to run into when the deluge threatens, our altar to offer all our gifts on ? If he be not all this to us, who is, what is ? We must have it somewhere. It is all one to have no Christ, as to make no use of him.

3. It may be known by our concernedness for him, and carriage towards him.

Concernedness for him. That which is a man's all he is careful to keep, cautious not to lose, Job ii. 4. The reason is, because his life is his all ; when that is gone, all is gone with him. Now is Christ our life ? Shall skin for skin, or skin after skin, and all we have, go for him, to get him, to keep him ? What is his name, and honour, and glory, and gospel, and day, and book, and people, and ordinances to us ? Are they all precious, more precious than thousands of gold and silver ? If it go well with them, can

we rejoice, and grieve if it be otherwise? It was so with David, as to ordinances, Ps. lxxxiv. 10. and as to his church and people, Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. Never call Christ thy all unless this be so. It may be known also by our

Carriage towards him. That which is a man's all he loves, delights in, is pleased and satisfied with. Is it so with thy soul towards Christ? Ps. lxxiii. 25. Dost thou love him above all? Are thy desires towards him, thy delight in him? Is he the head, the gladness, of thy joy? Dost thou see him to be enough for thee, and canst thou say, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee—to see thy power and glory. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness," Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 5.—satisfied; None but Christ, none but Christ. Now by these marks we may try, if we will be faithful to our souls, whether Christ be made all this to us, or no, in these forty things which ye have heard of; that is, whether we be in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. i. 30.—whether we be true believers; whether we be for heaven or no? I beseech you, be not unwilling to come to the touch-stone: once well done and it is done for ever.

II. Here is ground for sharp reproof to those to whom other things are all in all, and Christ is nothing at all.

Are there any such? Certainly there are. But are there any such here? I wish there may not be. Why, who are they? They are of several sorts.

1. With the Jews to this day Moses is all in all. They are altogether for the ceremonial law, not believing that the Messiah is come, and hath

put an end to it. Their condition is sad, John viii. 24. It is our duty to pity and pray for them. There were, it seems, among the Christians, some that were for both Christ and Moses too ; but that would not do, Gal. v. 2—4. Those among ourselves with whom a pompous worship is all in all, are too like them.

2. With the papists, in matters of faith, the church is all in all. They believe as the church believes, though what that is they know not. They practise as the church enjoins, without inquiring—is it agreeable to the mind and will of him that is the King of the church? All for the mother, no matter for the Father : The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these, Jer. vii. 4. When Christ sent forth his apostles, their commission was not, Go teach what the church commands, but what Jesus commands. There are those who please themselves with drinking healths to the church.

3. With the same people, in matters of devotion, the Virgin Mary is all in all. They go on pilgrimage to her shrines ; they vow to her ; pray to her. For one chapel and altar that Christ hath, she hath twenty, forty. For one Pater noster there are ten Ave Mary's. They call her, queen of heaven, gate of glory, fountain of mercy, mother of all grace ; their saviouress, mediatrix, advocatress. In the Psalms where God and Lord is, they put Lady, and apply all the passages to her blasphemously ; our Lady's Psalter. They call to her to command her Son to do what they would have him to do. We are told, at Dieppe, in Normandy, there is an image of our Lady with a rod in her hand, to correct her Son if he refused her.

4. With the same people, in matters of power and supremacy, St. Peter is all in all. The popes call themselves the successors of St. Peter. If in any thing, it is in denying his Master, and in cutting off the ear of Malchus with his sword. Their church lands they call the patrimony of St. Peter ; they count him the rock upon which their church is built, as if he were the foundation, not Christ. God deliver me from that church that is so founded. When the time of its fall comes, it will appear it was sand-built, not rock-built.

5. With some the light within is all in all. It is so

For guidance and direction. As it dictates they say we are to do ; without trying by the written word, whereas—"To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. Time hath been, said Paul, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Acts xxvi. 9.—and it is said, it shall be again, John xvi. 2. Also,

For justification and salvation. Some have said they expect it not by a Christ crucified at Jerusalem, but by obedience to the light within. By which I am well assured they will never have it, Acts iv. 12. We deny not a light within, but we deny its sufficiency in these two things.

6. With some, and those too many, their own righteousness is all in all. The merit of their own performances, what they are, have, do, suffer ; their prayers, tears, alms-deeds, their innocence, and freedom from common pollutions that are in the world through lust, as the Pharisee, Luke xviii. These are the things they trust to ;

at least, in conjunction and copartnership with Christ—these with a little, to eke, from God's mercy, and Christ's merit—as the old ignorant Jews, Rom. x. 3. No; if this were so, how is Christ all in all? See the mind that Paul was of, and be like-minded; “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him,” Phil. iii. 7—9.

7. With some, carnal pleasures and sensual delights are all in all. Let them have their fill with these, and they have enough. Wine, and music, and dancing, and mirth, and jollity; sports, and pastimes, and recreations; horses, and hounds, and hawks, and harlots; these their hearts are upon—rioting and drunkenness, (Rom. xiii.) making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—And will this do? In sober sadness tell me, canst thou think thou art made and maintained for such a purpose? Eccl. xi. 9. James v. 1, 5.

8. With some, worldly wealth is all in all. Let them have money enough, and land enough; and much good may others have with God, and Christ, and heaven, with grace enough, and glory enough. Poor creature, what a miserable choice dost thou make! Prov. xxiii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. See a sad instance of the consequences of this folly, Luke xii. 16—21.

9. With some, a thing called reputation is all in all. To have a name amongst men, especially great men; to be in honour and power, and to have preferment. They will sell God and their

souls to compass it, as one of the popes did to be pope. And what a vain, poor, empty thing is this when they have it—a puff, a bubble! How uncertain! of how short continuance! how many ways exposed!

10. With some, in one word, self is all in all. The great idol of the world is loving self, and seeking self, and pleasing self, and applauding self, Phil. ii. 21. O let us all take warning, and look to it. Our first lesson in Christ's school, is to deny self, Luke ix. 23.

III. Then suffer, I beseech you, a serious word of exhortation; it is to you all, without exception, one or other:

1. To make Christ, Christ, I say, and Christ alone, your all in all.

If you *make* him so to yourselves, it is the best evidence you can have, that God hath *made* him so to you. Make him so by a cordial and speedy closing with him, accepting of him as your foundation, food, root. Teach them your children, and when they have learned them, explain them to them as well as you can. It will be a means to increase your own knowledge. God will make it so, Matt. xxv. 29.

Your baptismal vow binds you to it. Into what are ye baptized? Was it not into Christ? And did ye not put on Christ? Gal. iii. 27. A Christian, and Christless! how sad it is! A Christian, and Christ nothing to him! Is it so with Mahometans? Is Mahomet nothing to them?—With papists? Is the pope nothing to them?

If Christ be not all in all with you, he will be nothing at all to you—for justification, salvation.

If Christ be not all in all with you, you are nothing at all to God; only as sounding brass,

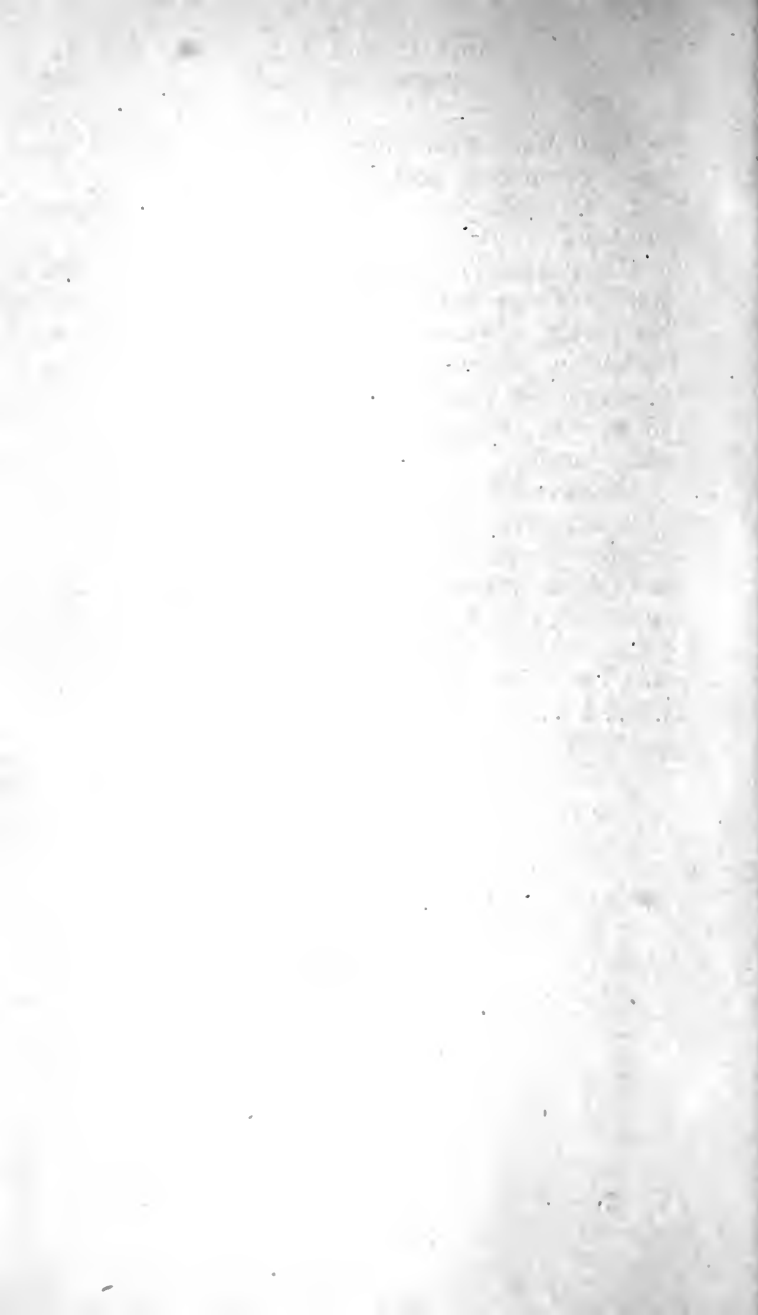
and a tinkling cymbal ;—your praying is nothing, your repenting is nothing.

2. To walk as those that have made Christ their all.

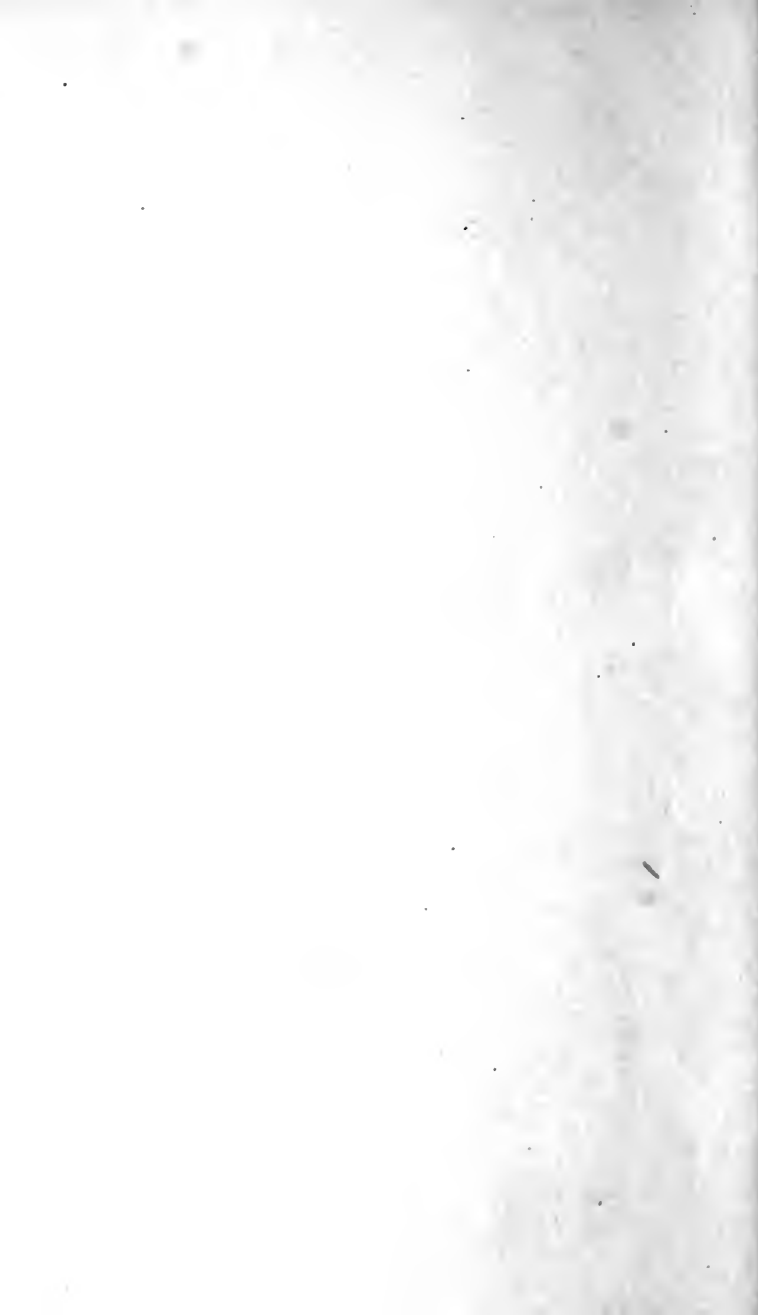
Circumspectly, watchfully. Learn Paul's lesson—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," Col. iii 17. Pray, repent, deny yourselves, give alms, suffer reproof ; all in his name, strength, merit.

Comfortably, cheerfully. There is cause. Thou art a happy man. All is thine if Christ be thy all ; "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines : the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Christ is all, and in all."

THE END.











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